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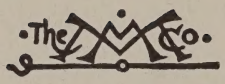

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HISTORY OF LABOUR IN THE UNITED STATES

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BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE
BY
HENRY W. FARNAM

VOLUME I

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The organisation of the Department of Economics and Sociology of the Carnegie Institution of Washington and its general plan for studying the economic history of the United States were explained in the writer's introduction to Professor Johnson's *History of Commerce* two years ago. As there stated, the subject was taken up by topics, and twelve divisions were formed, each being placed in charge of an economist selected for his familiarity with the field assigned to him. Within each division, it was designed to secure carefully prepared monographs on topics not yet adequately treated in our economic or historical literature, and later to prepare, on the basis of this foundation work, a comprehensive treatise covering the subject matter of the division. The twelve heads of divisions formed a board of collaborators which met periodically for consultation, and whose chairman attended to the administrative work and acted as supervising editor of their publications. In some instances, this scheme was modified to meet the problems and needs of the several divisions, and its progress was retarded by the great amount of material to be collected and utilised, by the difficulty of securing competent scholars to make the studies, and by the competing demands made upon the collaborators, no one of whom could devote more than a part of his time to the work. However, we have secured the preparation of over 170 monographic studies, of which 65 have been published, in addition to elaborate indices of the economic material found in the documents of thirteen of our States and a considerable number of studies published in magazines. Full details may be found in our bibliography, the third edition of which, covering nineteen pages, was issued in 1914. The publication of the divisional histories began in 1915 with the *History of Commerce* by Professor Johnson and colleagues. This was followed, in 1916, by Dr. Clark's *History of Manufactures from 1607 to 1860* and in 1917, by the *History of Transportation*

to 1860, prepared under the direction of Dr. B. H. Meyer. The *History of Labour in the United States* thus forms the fourth in the contemplated series of *Contributions to American Economic History.*

Since the last volume was issued, a change has taken place in the organisation of the Board of Collaborators. In contrast to the other departments of the Carnegie Institution, the Department of Economics and Sociology has never had a salaried director, giving all of his time to the work, nor has it had an office staff or permanent headquarters. Its organisation has been rather that of a body of scholars, united informally to carry on and direct the work of research, but filling at the same time other positions, generally academic or governmental, and not devoting themselves exclusively to the work of the Institution. Although in our last five annual reports we have urged the desirability of a more centralised and permanent form of organisation, the Trustees have not seen their way clear to effect the change, and it was felt both by them and by us that the work of the Board of Collaborators could be carried on as effectively outside of the Carnegie Institution as in connection with it. The Trustees accordingly approved, in December, 1916, the continuance of the work independently of the Institution by the passage of the following votes:

> Resolved, That the Department of Economics and Sociology, as now constituted, be and hereby is discontinued.
>
> Resolved, That, subject to approval by the Executive Committee of specific allotments, the balance of appropriations remaining to the credit of the Department of Economics and Sociology, . . . be and hereby is made available for use by the group of collaborators who were formerly members of this department.

This sum has now been more than doubled by an additional gift, and the collaborators, reorganised as the Board of Research Associates in American Economic History, expect to continue the work.

The fact that the present book is published by The Macmillan Company, while its predecessors were published by the Carnegie Institution, stands in no causal connection with the change just mentioned. Even if the Board had continued its connection with the Institution, it might have been thought

desirable to have this book issued independently, as has been the case with regard to sixty-five of the monographs prepared under its direction in past years. The change of publishers in the present instance is the result simply of weighing the relative advantages of two modes of publication for this particular work.

The history of labour was originally in charge of Carroll D. Wright, who secured the preparation and publication of considerable monographic and documentary material which he expected to use in writing the history, but who did not live to complete the work. Among the compilations, the publication of which he encouraged by an appropriation from the allotment of his division, was the *Documentary History of American Industrial Society,* edited by Professor Commons and published in eleven volumes in 1909–1911. When the death of Colonel Wright, in 1909, made it necessary to look for a successor to take charge of his division, the choice naturally fell upon Professor Commons.

The Documentary History is not the only contribution that Professor Commons has made to the literature of labour. His works on *The Regulation and Restriction of Output by Employers and Unions,* on *Trade Unionism and Labor Problems,* on *Races and Immigrants in America,* on *Labor and Administration,* and on *Principles of Labor Legislation* (in collaboration with Dr. John B. Andrews), attest his scholarly activity in this field. He has also had practical experience in solving the complex and puzzling labour problems of the present day through his service of two years as a member of the Industrial Commission of Wisconsin, and through his membership on the Federal Commission on Industrial Relations.

In contrast to *Commerce, Manufactures,* and *Transportation,* the *History of Labour,* is but indirectly influenced by physical environment. In the three former divisions, the physiography of the country, its waterways, its coast line, its mineral resources, its climate, the fertility of its soil, all play an important and determining part. In the labour movement, we are more concerned with the power of ideas. Many of the conceptions which have had an important influence upon the course of social and political movements are of humble origin.

They have not infrequently germinated in the minds of people who appeared to their contemporaries as agitators, fanatics, extremists, and unpractical idealists. The United States has always been fertile in social experiments, in societies for the propagation of fads, in periodicals and books written to aid a cause or a doctrine destined in the minds of the few to whom they were revealed to bring in a new era for the human race. Many of the theories advanced have been crude and fallacious and have died with, or even before, their authors. Many of the reformers have failed to realise their plans. Yet this intellectual ebullition has left a certain deposit of sound ideals and practical methods. These have had to compete with traditional convictions, with vested interests, and with existing law, and the resultant of these often antagonistic forces has determined the colour and character of our social history. The physical environment of this struggle of ideas for existence has acted as a constant limitation upon their power, and as a test of their viability. It has seldom determined their genesis, for undoubtedly, like the early settlers of the continent, many of the ideas which have played a part in our history are of European ancestry, and much of the interest of the movements traced in this book lies in the application of these ideas under the peculiar economic conditions of a new country.

It will be observed that Professor Commons has endeavoured to trace the history of movements with their philosophies and ideals, as distinguished from the history of labour organisations or the history of the technical application of labour to the processes of production. These topics are frequently referred to in the present work, but appear rather as the background of the study than as its main theme, and it is left to future historians to supplement the excellent monographs which we already have on parts of these subjects with a comprehensive history of them as a whole. In the meantime, the history of the labour movement as a social and political force, constantly exercising its influence upon the leaders of labour unions and of political parties, should be of material assistance to whoever may undertake in the future the comprehensive study of labour in its other aspects.

HENRY W. FARNAM.

Yale University, 1917.

PREFACE

In order to cover adequately a field so wide and so little explored as that dealt with in these volumes it has been thought best to adopt the co-operative and monographic method of research and publication. Each writer, though responsible for a definite period, has contributed to the others and received contributions from them. The chapters bring together the researches of several students in my classes and seminars during the past twelve years, a search throughout the country in libraries, cellars, and attics for original sources, and the series of university lectures by which during these years the researches and sources have been assembled and interpreted.

The writers whose monographs herein summarise these researches by periods have made additional detailed studies as indicated below, and with them is given a list of others who have co-operated in the same way, and whose researches have been liberally drawn upon. Owing to the fact that the work has been mainly co-operative, and that each of the six writers in these volumes has drawn liberally on the investigations of the others, it is impracticable, except in this general way, to assign the credit for any particular contribution to the one who happened to be the original investigator. The contributions hitherto unpublished will be readily distinguished.

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In the course of preparation of the foregoing studies and the present volumes selections were made from the original ma-

terial collected, and these were published in the eleven volumes of the *Documentary History of American Industrial Society,* to which references are made in the footnotes of the following pages and in the bibliographical notes. Additional material is mentioned or reproduced herewith.

In editing and indexing the volumes I have had the assistance of Mr. Selig Perlman, Mr. David J. Saposs, Miss Grace Pugh, and Miss L. Marie Brauer. Neither the *Documentary History* nor these volumes of contributions could have been prepared, had it not been for the generous aid of my colleague and teacher, Professor Richard T. Ely, and the gentlemen, Mr. V. Everit Macy, Mr. Stanley McCormick, Mr. R. Fulton Cutting, Captain Ellison A. Smyth, Mr. Justice P. Henry Dugro, Mr. Charles R. Crane, Honorable William H. Hatton, and Mr. William English Walling, whom he interested in the American Bureau of Industrial Research. I am also indebted to the Carnegie Institution of Washington for financial assistance and to Professor Henry W. Farnam for painstaking and valued editorial examination and criticism.

JOHN R. COMMONS.

University of Wisconsin, 1917.

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INTRODUCTION

By JOHN R. COMMONS

AMERICAN LABOUR HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

Conditions, Philosophies, Movements. Free land, 4. The suffrage, 5. Extension of markets, 6. Federal and judicial system of government, 9. Immigration, 9. Cycles of prosperity and depression, 10. Historical periods, 11. Colonial, 11. Citizenship, 11. Trade unionism, 12. Humanitarianism, 12. Nationalisation, 13. Upheaval and reorganisation, 13. Corresponding philosophies, 13. Socialism, 14. Anarchism and Syndicalism, 15. Politics, 17. Intellectuals, 19.

THESE volumes deal mainly with the history of labour conditions, of labour philosophies and of labour movements — not primarily with the structure or policies of labour unions,[1] nor with the history of individual unions, nor with the legislative results of movements, nor with current problems. Their field is rather the background which explains structure, policies, results and problems.

Labour movements in America have arisen from peculiar American conditions, and it is by understanding these conditions that we shall be able to distinguish the movements and methods of organisation from those of other countries. Out of these conditions have sprung certain philosophies, or certain modifications of imported philosophies, and it is the union of these conditions and philosophies that explains the movements. Consequently, through these chapters runs the interaction of economic, industrial, and political conditions, with many varieties of individualistic, socialistic, and protectionistic philosophies. The labour history of the country is here treated as a part of its industrial and political history. It is the story of how, in the course of three centuries, the wage-earner, as a distinct class, has been gradually, even violently, separating

1 The history of structure and policies of unions has been ably written by Messrs. Hollander and Barnett, of the Johns Hopkins University, and by the several investigators working under their direction. References will be found to their monographs, which are cited to date in the bibliographical notes below, II, 581–584.

himself from the farmer, the merchant, and the employer, and coming to feel that his standing and progress in society depend directly on wages and not directly on prices, rents, profits, or interest.

The condition which seems to distinguish most clearly the history of labour in America from its history in other countries is the wide expanse of free land. As long as the poor and industrious can escape from the conditions which render them subject to other classes, so long do they refrain from that aggression on the property rights or political power of others, which is the symptom of a "labour movement."

But even here we are likely to ascribe to the bounty of nature what proceeds from the struggle of classes. Like the *laissez-faire* philosophers, we trace back to a benevolent physical nature what springs directly from our social nature, and shows itself in organisation and political effort. Nature, in the physical sense, has been as bountiful to the poor and industrious of Australia, in proportion to their numbers, as it has been in America. But how different the outcome! In Australia the land has been locked up in great holdings, and labourers have been forced to fight the battles of organisation in the cities and on the ranches, rather than escape as individuals to lands that are free. Thus trade-unionism, socialistic politics, governmental coercion of employers, a parliament dominated by a labour party, characterise the labour movement of Australasia.

America, under the constitution of 1787, started off with a similar seizure of its western lands by speculators and slave owners. The masses of the people gradually awakened, then resisted, finally revolted, and a political struggle of half a century over the land laws ended in a Civil War, with its homestead law. The struggle was renewed when the railroad land grants of the Civil War brought back again in a new form the seizure by speculators, and again was renewed under the name of "conservation of natural resources." Free land was not a mere bounty of nature; it was won in the battle of labour against monopoly and slavery. So in these volumes are brought together evidences of this struggle of the farmer on the frontier and the labourer in the city, confused and clouded, as it was, by a dozen other struggles. In the realm of phi-

losophies, it was individualism rather than socialism, individual labour rather than trade unionism, political organisation rather than economic organisation, the laws of Congress rather than the "laws of nature"— a labour movement based on the ideas of a "middle class" or the "producing classes" rather than the "wage-class." In this sense, the free-land struggle, from George Henry Evans in the decade of the thirties of the nineteenth century to Henry George in the eighties, was as characteristic, for the time being, of American labour movements, as trade unionism in England, socialism in Germany, anarchism in Spain, nihilism in Russia, or labourism in Australia.

Even more fundamental than free land is that political institution which alone could make land a political issue. At least two or three generations before labour in other countries, whether peasant or wage-earner, had won the first great point of vantage for which it fought, labour in America had received with scarcely a struggle the boon of universal manhood suffrage. Almost unnoticed, the decade of the twenties, with straggling exceptions, completed the endowment of the mechanic and labourer in the North with his equal share in sovereignty, regardless of property, religion or origin. When, therefore, in the thirties, the first glimmerings of his condition as an unprivileged class awakened him from sleep, the "working man" entered promptly into that political struggle, which has ever been his hope and his undoing. The tragedy, the credulity, the fiasco, the lessons learned, forgotten, learned again, the defection of leaders, the desperate reaction to violence or anarchism, the disintegration of unions — these are the moving picture of eight decades of that universal suffrage, for which the labourer would give his life, but by which he has often followed a mirage. The repeating cycle of politics and trade unionism, political struggle and economic struggle, political organisation and economic organisation, marks out the course of this history of labour.

The vast area of the United States, coupled with free trade within that area and a spreading network of transportation, has developed an unparalleled extension of the competitive area of markets, and thereby has strikingly distinguished American

movements from those of other countries. It is almost as though the countries of Europe, from Ireland to Turkey, from Norway to Italy, had been joined in a single empire like China, but, unlike China, had passed through a century of industrial revolution. Here, indeed, we have had at first thirteen, and now forty-eight sovereign states within a single empire — their laws as widely different as those of petty democracies in New England and slave aristocracies in the South, their industries as divergent as the manufactures of Old England, the gold mines of Australia, the agriculture of the semi-tropics. It is the historical extension of markets over this broad expanse, from colonial times to the present, that has changed the character of competition, intensified its pressure, separated manufactures from agriculture, introduced the middleman, produced new alignments of social classes, and obliterated the futile lines that distinguish the jurisdiction of States. Without realising this extension of competitive areas, it is impossible to perceive either the characteristic features of American movements or the peculiar philosophies that distinguish them from the contemporaneous movements in Europe. Even the wonderful progress in the control of natural resources, summed up by economists as the "production of wealth," appears as but an after effect proceeding from this extension of markets which determines more directly the "distribution of wealth." For, it is not so much the mechanical inventions and the growth of industrial technique, which more properly belongs to the physical and engineering sciences, that have given character to American industrial movements, as it is the development and concentration of bargaining power over immense areas, whether in the hands of the merchant, the banker, the employer or the employé. The struggles with which we have to do are struggles to strengthen this bargaining power of one element against another, showing their results in the movement of prices, values and rates, whether for commodities, land, stocks, bonds, interest or wages. It is the emergence of these various struggles involved in the emergence of bargaining classes that we see when we follow the extension of markets. Beginning with the earliest colonial period, when the artisan was an itinerant, travelling laboriously to the farm or plantation of

his employer who was also the consumer of his product, we next come to the custom-order stage and retail-shop stage, when the consumer travelled to the town, and it was the merchant or pedlar, not the artisan, who travelled to the consumer. In these stages, covering practically the entire colonial period, the interests of the small merchant, employer, and journeyman were identical, and, so far as they formed organisations to protect or strengthen their bargaining power, these organisations included, often in the same individual, all of the economic functions of wage-earning, price-fixing, and profit-making. Such was the typical organisation of the guild, whose occasional appearance is noted in our colonial period, and of the charitable and benevolent societies of the early decades of the nineteenth century.

It was not until after the constitution of 1787, and its levelling down of the market barriers which each colony had erected against the others, that a new stage began to appear with its wholesale markets, its credit system, and its separation of the merchant-capitalist, or capitalist-wholesaler, from the manufacturer on the one hand and the retailer on the other. In this stage the "manufacturer" was merely an incipient employer without capital — the "boss," the contractor,— the successor of the master workman — whose function was mainly that of driving the wage-bargain. The distinction between the employer and the wage-earner at the time was not so much the amount of his income or his possession of capital, as the contingent and speculative character of his income. His profit was the margin between the prices he paid for labour and the prices he received from the wholesale-merchant, or merchant-capitalist, for his product. The wage-earner, on the other hand, received a stipulated income for his physical exertion. The prices received by the contractor or employer were at the mercy of the merchant-capitalist and his main source of profit was his ability to reduce the prices which he paid to labour. This "sweated" condition, produced by the widening of the labour market and seen for the first time in a few trades at the beginning of the century, but seen most clearly in the decade of the thirties, drove the wage-earner as such to his first conscious union with competing labourers in defence against the

master-workman who had now become the "boss." This was the signal for the breakup of the guild-like industrial stage which united master, journeyman and apprentice, and the substitution of the trade union of journeymen and the employers' union of masters, each contending for control of the apprentice. Different trades experience this break-up at different periods, and belated trades repeat the industrial history of older ones. Even to-day, we often find, in so-called trade-unions supplying a narrow local market with small investment in tools, like teamsters and musicians, what is really a guild of masters, owners and wage-earners.[2]

Accompanying this separation of merchant, employer, and wage-earner, and called forth in order to aid the merchant in his extension of credits, a banking system arose, with a new bargainer in the social stratification, the financier. Later, in the 'sixties, with the railroad and its thousand-mile separation of producer from consumer, this middleman and this financier arose to such a position of power in industry and politics, that the movements of farmers, wage-earners and even small manufacturers focussed their attack on the symptoms or sources of this power. The peculiar philosophy of "greenbackism" emerged, as the American form of Europe's socialism and anarchism.

Not until this tri-century extension of markets had practically reached its limit in the decade of the eighties, and the nation had become a single market menaced at every point of its vast expanse by every competitor, no matter where situated, did the strictly modern movement, similar to that of older nations, take form and animus. And now it has rapidly gone even beyond the movements of other nations, for, on the one side, the huge corporation, on the other side, the trade union, have each reached a stage of centralisation under a single head that brooks no competitor — far beyond the loose and tolerant syndicates of capital or unions of labour in foreign lands. This modern movement is only touched in these chapters. It is the field of current problems rather than history. But throughout the history its huge and menacing proportions have

2 See chapter on Teamsters in Commons, *Trade Unionism and Labor Problems*, and chapter on Musicians, in *Labor and Administration*.

been kept in sight, for, as the outcome of history is known, its meaning is read.

While economic forces have widened competitive areas to the limits of the nation, a system of government by States has covered these areas by widely divergent laws and administration. At the same time, the courts, blocking the way of a new aggressive class with precedents created to protect a dominant class, have had, in this country, a high authority unknown in other lands. By vetoing the laws which labour in its political struggles has been able to secure, the courts, joined to divergent state policies, have excluded or delayed labour from legislative influence. Consequently the energies of organisation are turned to the economic field, and often, in the latter decades, a trade union, by the force of its bargaining power, has exacted over a competitive area wider than any State more drastic regulations than those previously vetoed by the courts or even adopted by the most responsive legislatures. In this way has our Federal and judicial system of government added its pressure on labour and forced it to acquire by trade union action what in other countries has been granted by legislation. Furthermore, at the culmination of each aggressive labour movement, the courts have become a refuge for employers fleeing from the attacks of unions, until finally, by the weapon of the injunction newly applied in the eighties, they have even taken to themselves legislative and executive functions which the more popular branches of government had hesitated to exercise. In this way, the Federal Constitution with its self-government of the States and its threefold separation of the branches of government has been as powerful as economic conditions in giving to American labour movements their peculiar character.

More profound than any other condition distinctive of American movements have been the influx of immigrants and the unequalled variety of races, nationalities, and languages thrown together into a single competitive area. The problem of assimilation and Americanisation is thrust directly upon labour as a class, for immigrants and races come first as wage-earners, and it is only by the assimilating power of labour organisations that they can be brought together in a movement that depends for success on their willingness to stop competition and espouse

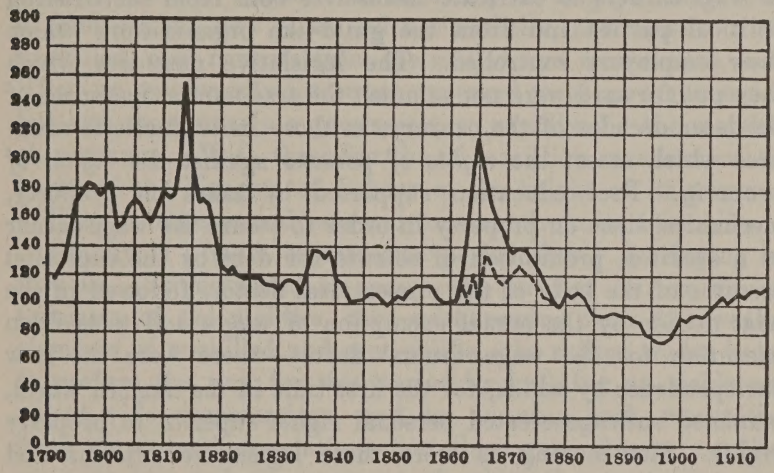
co-operation. Property values, business profits, and professional incomes are elevated by the very competition of immigrants which depresses the wage-earning classes, and, while the beneficiaries may look with complacency on the incoming multitudes, the labourers themselves are reduced either to the invidious necessity of resisting their coming, or to the patriotic burden of assimilating them after they come. It was not until after the decade of the forties, with its revolutions in Europe, that we begin to find two languages — German and English — employed in union meetings, but after the eighties the number increased in some unions to five, ten, and even more. The emancipation of the Negro meanwhile added, in effect, another race to the list of immigrants. It is in meeting this problem of races and immigration that American labour movements have displayed their most violent exclusiveness and their most humane fraternity. At the one extreme are the exclusion of the Chinese by law and the exclusion of immigrants by the "closed shop," at the other is the affiliation in the same union of whites and blacks.[3] Circumstances, conditions, necessity, determine these extremes and the intermediate policies. From the very beginning of organised labour at the close of the eighteenth century, to its situation at the beginning of the twentieth, we find these swelling problems of immigration, race conflict, and race assimilation giving character to American movements and distinguishing them from foreign.

While the area of market competition has extended more widely than in other countries, the level of prices and wages across this area has arisen and fallen more excessively. Cycles of prosperity and depression have characterised all lands during the expansion of industry and credit in the nineteenth century, but the American cycles have touched higher peaks and lower depths. To the speculative character of American credit have been added the vagaries of paper money. Labour movements in all countries pursue these cycles, and the chart herewith showing the movement of American prices shows also the movements of American labour. The two peaks of paper money, in the thirties and sixties, indicate two periods of excited, aggressive organisation, forced up in advance of their

[3] See also, *Commons, Races and Immigrants in America.*

time, if measured only by industrial evolution. In these and other periods of rising prices, when the cost of living was outleaping the rise of wages, when business was prosperous and labour in demand, then aggressive strikes, trade unionism, class struggle, suddenly spread over the industrial sections of the country. At the other extreme, in the periods of falling prices, with their depression of business and distress by unemployment, labour, in its helplessness and failure of defensive strikes, has turned to politics, panaceas, or schemes of universal reform, while class struggle has dissolved in humanitarianism.

Wholesale Prices 1790–1910 [3a]



Scarcely do these depressed periods occupy our attention, except to show the theories and philosophies that incubated during them, or the desperate strikes or violent outbreaks, the futility of which was evident at such a time.

It is by viewing the broad perspective of these various forces outstanding in American conditions, that we are able to distinguish separate historical periods and to characterise the movements of each period. The colonial, or dormant, period extends properly to the decade of the twenties, for such occasional awakenings as we find prior to 1827 do not take the form

[3a] Prepared by Harold V. Roelse; see Hansen, "Wholesale Prices for the United States, 1801–1840," Publications of the American Statistical Association, XIV, 804.

of concerted action by workmen of different occupations, but are fitful contests in separate trades. But in the thirties the public was suddenly awakened, and a new term, *trades' union,* appeared, signifying a *union of the trades,* where formerly there had been only "societies" of journeymen, or guild-like "associations" of masters, journeymen, and apprentices. The face-mark of this period is distinctly that of awakened *citizenship* — the first appearance in the history of modern nations of wage-earners as a class exercising the privilege of suffrage. Here appears the first newspaper published in their interest, and a study of the period shows the first painful efforts of wage-earners to extricate themselves both from the existing political parties and from the guild-like organisations which their employers controlled. The legislative measures which they put forward were not so much the trade-union measures of the later decades of the century, as those individualistic measures which assert the *rights of persons* against the *rights of property.* Free education supported by taxes on property, mechanics' liens on property in order to secure the wage-earner as a creditor, prohibition of seizure for debt by the capitalist creditor of the body of the propertyless debtor, followed in the next decade by the actual exemption of wages and tools from execution for the wage-earners' debts — these were the new jurisprudence by which, for the first time in the modern world, manhood suffrage created personal rights superior to property rights. Slow-moving as were these legislative reforms and beneficial as they might be to later generations, the wage-earners of the thirties soon forgot them in their trades' union effort of 1835 and 1836 to force wages up with the cost of living.

The panic of 1837 brought to a sudden stop these aggressions, and, for the next dozen years we find the most astonishing junction of humanitarianism, bizarre reforms and utopias, protective tariffs and futile labour legislation, known to our history. Swallowed, as these were in the rising prices of the gold discoveries and in the anti-slavery agitation, which approached its crisis in the early fifties, this *humanitarian* period slipped away into a second trade union period of the middle of the decade of the fifties, scarcely noticed beneath the absorbing premonitions of civil war.

The *nationalisation* period, from the War to the end of the seventies, repeats on a bigger scale of prosperity and depression and a wider area of competition, the events of the thirties. During the sixties the railroads, paper money and mechanical invention join together to throw up agitated organisations, and then, during the succeeding depression following 1873, to throw back their constituents into disorganisation, secret unions, or criminal aggression.

This agitational period of the sixties and seventies pointed to what, during the halting prosperity of the eighties, may be truly designated as the *Great Upheaval.* For, never before had organisation reached out so widely or deeply. New areas of competition, new races and nationalities, new masses of the unskilled, new recruits from the skilled and semi-skilled, were lifted up temporarily into what appeared to be an organisation, but was more nearly a procession, so rapidly did the membership change. With three-fourths of a million members on the books of the Knights of Labour at the height of its power, a million or more passed into and soon out from its assemblies.

Finally is a more constructive period slowly developing before us. Strengthened by many who enlisted during the enthusiasm of the eighties, then withdrawing from the weaker elements of unskilled and semi-skilled, the skilled trades began to preface the way for this period by building up stable and nation-wide organisations, and by winning such recognition from employers' associations that they were able to establish more or less enduring systems of arbitration or trade agreement, and to retain their membership during a period of depression. At the same time, the recurring problem of the unskilled, the semi-skilled, and the immigrant is again threatening an upheaval. In the field of legislation the crude and unconstitutional laws of earlier movements are now being followed by laws more carefully studied and drafted, while greater attention is given to the methods of administration.

These several historical periods have produced, not only characteristic movements, but also characteristic arguments, theories and philosophies, designed to win converts to the movements, or to win support from the public. Thus the arguments and pleas for a reduction of hours of labour started off with the

citizenship view of securing more leisure; then came the humanitarian horror of helpless exhaustion; then in the fifties, the older trade union philosophy of making work; then in the sixties, the newer trade union philosophy of the standard of living; then the opportunistic bargaining of the trade agreement; finally the philosophy of the police power of the State based on the actual facts of the degree of menace to health.[4] Each historical period has bequeathed its own theory as a permanent contribution to later periods.

Back of these specific theories advanced for such immediate reforms as reduction in the hours of labour, have been more far-reaching philosophies, such as socialism and anarchism, going to the foundations of society and government. These have been partly imported from Europe, partly indigenous, and altogether have played an important part in American movements. The evolution of these philosophies is accompanied by an evolution of terms and phrases used to describe both them and the conditions which prepare the way for them. Indeed, a history of the origin and meaning of the words employed is almost an interpretation of labour movements. The word "socialism," first generally employed in the thirties, signified at that time the paternalistic and welfare schemes of Robert Owen without universal suffrage. The modern socialists in the forties distinguished themselves first as communists, but when, in the seventies, that term became identified with anarchism, they reverted to the word that had signified Owenism. The present meaning of the word as used in these chapters, with its collateral terms "class struggle," "class war," "class consciousness," and so on, indicates a revolutionary movement designed to overthrow other classes by the action of a wage-earning class. But modern socialism employs the three methods of trade unionism, politics, and co-operation, and these words also have changed their significance.

The original word for a union of wage-earners was "society" or "association," indicating a local union of journeymen within a single trade. It was not until the decade of the thirties that the term "trade union" came into vogue, both in England and the United States, and its earliest form, "trades'

4 See Commons and Andrews, *Principles of Labor Legislation*, Chap. I.

union "— with an apostrophe after the plural "trades "— was an abbreviation of a more explicit phrase, like the one employed in Philadelphia in 1827, namely, "mechanics' union of trade associations." Later, in the form "trade union," the term was turned back and applied to the original local societies themselves, and then to the national and international unions of local societies of the same trade; so that, when local trade unions of a single city again united in the sixties, a variety of new terms was employed, such as "trades' assembly," and "central labour union." At the present time the term "central bodies" is used to signify what were the "trades' unions" of the thirties and the "trades' assemblies" of the sixties.

The "trades' union," or central body, although it is the second form of organisation of labour, is the first to arouse the public, and it repeats itself in all industrial countries. The revolution in St. Petersburg in 1905 was identical in its form of organisation with the trades' union of New York or of Philadelphia in 1835. It represents the uprising of a class against other classes, submerging the lines that distinguish occupations.[5]

As long as the wage-earning class accepts the existing order and merely attempts to secure better wage bargains, its goal must eventually be some form of the "trade agreement," which recognises the equal bargaining rights of the organised employers. Its union is not "class conscious" in the revolutionary sense of socialism, but "wage-conscious" in the sense of separation from, but partnership with, the employing class. On the other hand, in recent times, a revolutionary unionism has appeared, seeking by means of the strike of all employés regardless of trade differences, by the rejection both of politics and agreements with employers, and by concerted damage to the employers' property, to overthrow the capitalist. Taking its name "syndicalism" from the French for "unionism," it indicates the same split in trade unionism as that which in the seventies separated anarchism out from socialism. Syndicalism is "class conscious" unionism, rather than "wage conscious," its object is revolution rather than the existing

[5] See Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, 102, on the British "Trades Union" of 1830–1834.

order, conquest rather than trade agreement, and, at the same time, anarchism rather than socialism. The pages of this history often reveal a similarity between the methods of syndicalism and the methods of certain unions not adhering to such a philosophy. It may be either a union whose members have suddenly risen from a condition of oppression and have an inexperienced confidence in their newly found power of organisation, or it may be a defeated and dissolving union whose members resort to violence. But the tyrannical abuse of power by a new union, or the secret destruction of property and business by a conquered union, is not to be confused with a social philosophy that exalts such abuse or destruction into a permanent system. It is rather an instance in one case, of immature power, where, sooner or later, of necessity, the union either is crushed by the employers or joins with them in a trade agreement; or, in the other case of that violence and secret anarchy that take the place of the restraining discipline of a union, recognised by the employers. In fact, syndicalism itself may possibly be interpreted as either the unripe philosophy of upstart unionism, or the pessimistic philosophy of defeated unionism.

This modern aspect of anarchism suggests that attention be paid to its precursors and to the family of anarchistic doctrines as they have come forth during a hundred and fifty years. The term is here employed in its original sense of rejection or weakening of the coercive power of government as well as its instruments of politics and legislation, in opposition to the socialistic doctrines of political action and increased power of the State controlled by the labour vote. In this sense the germs of anarchistic doctrine are found wherever we find a demand for the abolition of property titles, vested rights, or regulation by law, leaving individuals to the "free" exercise of their "natural rights," or leaving groups of individuals to the "free" exercise of whatever powers they have of combination, cooperation, or even coercion. It is a fundamental contradiction of anarchism that sooner or later its adherents are forced to resort to politics and state action in order to abolish state action; but in such case the consistency of the doctrine is maintained by weakening the power of the State at the point where

it interferes with the private interests of its adherents, as against the socialistic effort to strengthen the power of the state against opposing classes.

In this sense, the anarchistic doctrine, appearing in its mildest form as "free trade," and, by going deeper in the rejection of politics, of titles to property, of vested rights or state regulation, has taken the form of "free banking," "free land," "free capital," "greenbackism," voluntary co-operation, boycotting, exemption of unions from conspiracy laws, and finally syndicalism. In one direction it has run off to the individualistic anarchism of Warren in the thirties, Andrews in the fifties, Tucker in the eighties; in another to the communistic or co-operative anarchism of Fourier, Brisbane, Greeley, Weitling of the thirties and forties and the labour unions of the sixties and seventies; while in still another direction it has taken the coercive form of the boycott, and the strike of "conservative" unionism, going to the violent extreme of syndicalism, foreshadowed by Bakunin, practiced by the Chicago anarchists,[6] and exalted into a philosophy by the French unions, and the Industrial Workers of the World.

Back and forth between the socialistic and anarchistic doctrines has the labour movement swung, according to periods, conditions, and leaders. By a kind of natural selection a more "pragmatic" or "opportunistic" philosophy, based on the illogical variety of actual conditions and immediate necessities, has taken form in the American Federation of Labor, the railway brotherhoods, and industrial unionism, which is neither anarchism nor socialism but a species of protectionism combining both, and is analogous to the "solidarisme" of recent movements in France, and the "labourism" of England and Australasia.

Political movements, too, have changed in character, and, with them, the significance of the word politics. They differ from trade unionism in that, under the system of majority elections, they usually require coalition with other classes, whereas a union can act independently as a minority, without the consent of others. The first attempt to form a "labour party"

[6] For their doctrines see Eltzbacher, *Anarchism*. Bakunin's doctrine of government by "public opinion" was equivalent to the boycott.

in the early thirties resulted rather in a party of the "producing classes" as against the "aristocracy" or capitalist classes. The "capitalists" of the time were the money lenders, bankers, holders of public securities, wholesale and shipping merchants, great landowners and speculators, but not the farmers nor even the employers. The latter, together with the journeymen, composed the "working men" and "mechanics." It was not until the trades' unions of the middle thirties and their rejection of politics that wage-earners as a class separated themselves definitely in the larger cities from their employers. The political movements that followed were again mainly coalitions with the farmers, and only as the various socialist parties began to arise after the sixties, did politics take on a strictly wage-earning form. Meanwhile, from time to time, a kind of trade union politics appeared, not revolutionary in the socialistic sense, but directed to the narrower and more anarchistic object of relieving unions from the pressure of legislatures and courts controlled by hostile employers. In this way political movements have reflected the evolution of classes and policies, ranging all the way from the individualistic politics of small capitalists or wage-earners seeking to become capitalists, to the opportunistic politics of trade unions and the revolutionary politics of socialism or anarchism.

In the same way, the ideals and methods of voluntary co-operation have changed, according to circumstances and philosophies, from the distributive co-operation of all classes of consumers, the anarchistic co-operation of Josiah Warren in the thirties, and the communistic co-operation of Fourier and the "associationists" in the forties, all of them based on a philosophy of harmony of interests of all classes, to the "substitute for strikes" of the trade unionists of the sixties and the co-operative commonwealth of the Knights of Labour in the seventies and eighties, based on a philosophy of antagonism of interests. These were American forecasts of that revolutionary co-operation that to-day is becoming distinctly a weapon of the socialism of continental Europe.

These changes in the meaning of terms brought about by the gradual separation of class interests requires attention to be paid to a miscellaneous class of men and women, taking more

or less part in labour movements, yet distinct from manual workers. The term "intellectuals" is here used as a convenient designation of such individuals. In general their tendency has been to direct the manual workers away from the strict and narrow interest of wage-earners as a class, and to lead them towards affiliation with other classes. Some of these intellectuals have been business men or capitalists with a philanthropic turn or political ambition, like their great pioneer, Robert Owen, or like H. H. Day and Peter Cooper of the decade of the seventies; others have been professional men with similar bent of mind, especially lawyers, editors and reporters, like Greeley in the forties, Hinchcliffe in the sixties, F. A. Sorge, John Swinton and Henry D. Lloyd, in the seventies; others have been speculative philosophers and reformers, like Frances Wright, Robert Dale Owen, and Josiah Warren of the thirties, Brisbane, Stephen Pearl Andrews, and Edward Kellogg, of the forties; while a very large number, beginning as wage-earners and ever members of labour organisations, have shifted to politics, law, insurance, and other professions or speculative philosophies, like Ely Moore in the thirties, Ira Steward in the sixties; Martin A. Foran, Henry George, and George E. McNeill, in the seventies and eighties. The term "intellectuals," as applied to this diversified list of capitalists, philanthropists, philosophers, politicians, and ex-wage-earners, is used to signify merely that their own economic interest or means of livelihood lies, for the time being, in any direction other than that of wages derived from their own manual work. Although they often play a part in a current movement, they are almost never found to be active in the organisation or management of the "wage-conscious" trade unions, even though they may have begun as wage-earners and then graduated from such management. In this respect they distinguish somewhat American unionism from that especially of continental Europe, and even from that of American unions of women wage-earners, where "intellectuals" have been actual leaders.

In tracing out the complex interaction of conditions, philosophies and movements, different periods require different kinds of treatment and different degrees of detail with which the characteristic features are displayed. In the colonial period

and down to the decade of the thirties in the nineteenth century, the problem is mainly the industrial and marketing conditions, and there is very little of social philosophy and no concerted movements whatever. The interpretation of this period is therefore not to be looked for in any conscious programmes of contemporaries, but rather in such an analysis of conditions as will explain the absence of a wage earning class and avoid the error sometimes made of confusing the guild-like organisations of the time with labour unions. Here we have to do with the origins of trade unionism and wage-earners as a class, and this problem requires us to enter briefly upon the speculations set forth by European investigators, especially Karl Marx, Karl Bücher and Gustav Schmoller, and to determine to what extent their theories, based on European mediæval conditions, serve to explain the origins of American labour organisations.

The situation is very different in the decade of the thirties, for here the first appearance in the world's history of wage-earners endowed with the right of suffrage, suggests a study in detail of the way in which this inexperienced weapon was used. The reactions against its use, succeeded by the inflation of paper money, brought forth a trade unionism of the thirties, not based on a permanent change in industry or markets but on a temporary rise of prices and cost of living. Hence, here our problem in detail is to distinguish the forms and policies of labour organisations not having a reason for endurance but a reason only for keeping wages from lagging behind the prices of commodities.

In the next decade the almost complete annihilation of unions left the field to the intellectuals, and here our study turns largely to the origins of speculative and revolutionary philosophies which were destined in future years to play an important part in labour movements.

In the sixties the field is more complex, for we have, not only the philosophies of the preceding years, but the rise of national unions which had not yet learned to control the local unions from which they sprang. During the long depression that followed in the seventies, new forms of old philosophies hold our attention, for they are again, in the contest of anar-

chism, socialism and trade unionism, to have a part in the last two decades of the century.

Thus, while each period or decade has its characteristic features, and each has called forth differences both in emphasis and methods of treatment, yet through them all may be seen the evolution, more or less clear, of the economic conditions and the social and political philosophies, which, like streams from different sources, have formed the labour movement of the twentieth century.

PART ONE

COLONIAL AND FEDERAL BEGINNINGS
(to 1827)

By David J. Saposs

CHAPTER I

ORIGIN OF TRADE UNIONS

Theories of Industrial Evolution. Master's associations confused with trade unions, 25. Production theory inadequate, 26. Production and market theories contrasted, 27. Property and contract fundamental factors in industrial evolution, 28. Price-bargain criterion in class conflict, 29. New bargaining functions and bargaining classes, 29.

We place the beginning of American labour movements in the year 1827 at Philadelphia. In that year and place American wage-earners for the first time joined together as a class, regardless of trade lines, in a contest with employers.[1]

Prior to 1827 we place the first authentic organisation of a single trade and the first strike of wage-earners in the year 1786, also at Philadelphia. In that year the Philadelphia printers went out on a strike for a minimum wage of $6 a week.[2]

Between these dates, 1786 and 1827, there were sporadic strikes and isolated unions, but no labour movement. Before 1786 we find no strikes.

This chronology runs counter to certain allegations regarding the dates of the first strikes. The "first recorded labour strike," says Mrs. Van Rensselaer,[3] occurred in 1677, when "the licensed cartmen . . . combined to refuse full compliance when ordered to remove the dirt from the streets for three pence a load." A later strike, that of the New York bakers in 1741, is usually referred to, on the authority of the United States Commissioner of Labor, as the first American strike.[4]

1 See below, I. 169.

2 Stewart, *Documentary History of the Early Organisations of Printers*, in United States Labor Bureau *Bulletin*, No. 61, p. 860. An earlier strike of printers at New York in 1776 is alleged by Pasko in the *American Dictionary of Printing*, 390, but we have not found the contemporaneous record on which his statement is based. The printers on the *Printing Gazette* are alleged to have struck for an increase of wages, contending that, because of the British blockade of New York, their wages were not sufficient to maintain their customary standard of life.

3 Van Rensselaer, *History of the City of New York*, II, 219.

4 United States Department of Labor, *Third Annual Report*, 1887, *Report on Strikes and Lockouts*, 1029, 1030.

These early so-called strikes were not strikes of wage-earners against employers, but strikes of masters against the city government.[5] They were protests against municipal regulation of prices and not against the bargaining power of employers.

Our chronology also runs counter to the theory that the origin of class struggles is to be traced to the technical evolution of industry and the ownership of the "tools of production." Labour organisation and the "class struggle" of wage-earners in America preceded by many years the factory system which finally separated the worker from ownership of the tools.

Since the foregoing dates which we set for the beginnings of labour movements depend for their validity on the analysis of industrial evolution, we shall set forth briefly the two distinctive theories[6] that have been used to explain the origin of class struggles, and our adaptation of them to American conditions.

The theory of Karl Marx explains the origin of classes by the mode of production of wealth. Following the classification of Morgan,[7] society has passed through the hunting and fishing, the pastoral, the agricultural, the handicraft, and the industrial stages. Emphasis is placed on the nature of the technique and the tools used at a particular period.

The theories of Schmoller[8] and Bücher[9] place emphasis on the nature and extent of the market. The earliest stage is that of "independent domestic economy," in which production is carried on without markets and solely for the needs of the producing group. Town economy, or the stage of direct exchange, follows, with its transfer of goods directly from producer to consumer. Then comes national economy, or the stage of circulation, in which products ordinarily pass through many hands before they reach the consumer.

Each of these market theories is used to furnish a basis for the explanation both of economic activities and of social activities in general. In the stage of household economy we meet only with consumption goods. In town economy the tools and implements of labour are business capital, but not necessarily

5 See I. 53–55.

6 Ely, *Studies in the Evolution of Society*, pt. 1, chap. iii, states lucidly various theories.

7 Morgan, *Ancient Society*, 19.

8 Schmoller, *The Mercantile System; Grundriss der Allgemeinen Volkswirtschaftslehre*, II, pt. 4.

9 Bücher, *Die Entstehung der Volkswirtschaft*. Translation by Wickett, *Industrial Evolution*. References are to the translation.

the raw materials. In the national economy "acquisitive capital" is the means of controlling division of labour and circulation of products. Household economy lacks capital; town economy is hostile to it; national economy is capitalistic.[10]

Law, politics, military defence, and even ethics follow the nature and extent of the market. First, legal rights defined by the clan or feudal lord, then separate jurisdiction by the towns, then enforcement of law and police protection by the state. At first each separate house or manor is fortified, then each city is a fortress, then a few fortifications are placed along the national borders.[11] In the domestic economy interest on loans is forbidden because loans are made only for purposes of consumption. In the capitalistic economy interest is an economic necessity.[12]

The productionists claim as much for their theory. Marx and Engels summed up their generalisation as follows: "In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society — the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life." [13]

The market and the production theories are, of course, interdependent. Bücher explains the mode of production by the extent of the market: "We might say that housework is production for one's own needs, wage-work is custom work, handicraft is custom production, commission work (Verlag-

10 Bücher, *Industrial Evolution*, 143.
11 *Ibid.*, 146.
12 *Ibid.*, 113.
13 Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (tr. by Stone), 11. See also Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Engels, *The Origin of the Family* (tr. by Ernest Unterman), 9, 10. Both Marx and Engels admit that other factors influence the nature of social institutions, but they hold that production is the chief factor. Seligman, in his *The Economic Interpretation of History* explains the limitations of the economic factor in interpreting history so that it would be acceptable to the believers in either the market or the production theory of industrial evolution. See, however, Ely, *Studies in the Evolution of Society*, 25, note 2.

system) is decentralised, and factory labour centralised production of wares." [14]

Marx and Engels also at times explain the succession of stages of production by successive widening of markets. New markets forced the guild system to give way to "manufacturing" and the manufacturing system to give way to the factory system.[15] Later propounders of the production theory concede much more to the market theory. Hobson explains the slow progress of inventions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by "difficulties of transport and the slight irregular structures of markets," [16] and Vandervelde, though starting with the theory of Marx, adopts Schmoller's and Bücher's classification of marketing stages.[17]

While the production and market theories are interdependent, the production theory has precedence in the history of the race. The hunting and fishing, the pastoral, and even the agricultural stages, with their division of labour, were developed with little or no exchange of products.[18]

However, the earliest American colonists came from a race that had already passed through these stages. They had reached the handicraft and even the "manufacturing" stage of production, and England was just completing its transition from town economy to national economy. Consequently, industrial evolution in colonial times was not the evolution of tools and processes, but the evolution of markets fitted to utilise the tools and processes already evolved. The extension of the market took precedence over the mode of production as an explanation of the origin of new class alignments.

But it would be a mistake to conclude that the productionists or the circulationists relied upon either the mode of production or the widening of markets to explain the origins of class struggles. Back of production and exchange was the institution of property. For Marx and Engels it was not really production of wealth that compelled men to enter into definite relations "independent of their will." The "definite relation" which they

14 Bücher, *Industrial Evolution*, 176.

15 Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party;* also Marx, Capital (Kerr ed.), I, 820, 826 *et seq.;* Engels, *Origin of the Family*, 193, 212.

16 Hobson, *Evolution of Modern Capitalism* (rev. ed.), 21. His statement quite coincides with Bücher's.

17 Vandervelde, *Collectivism and Industrial Evolution* (tr. by Kerr), pt. 1.

18 Bücher, *Industrial Evolution*, 60, 67, 96.

had in mind was the relation of ownership supported by law and imposed by a dominant class. The "never ceasing struggle," whether of slaves and slave owners, patricians and plebeians, nobles and serfs, guild members and journeymen, employers and employés, was a struggle between owners and non-owners.[19] Ownership was accomplished outside the mode of production. It might be by war and conquest, it might be by expropriation through law of the labourer from the soil,[20] it might be by exclusive legal privileges of guilds and corporations [21]— whatever the method, the cause and origin of the class struggle is the struggle for ownership of the means of production. Within this struggle the current technique, or mode of production, merely determines its character.

Likewise for the market theory, there is back of the extension of market opportunities the legal institution of private contract and the enforcement of agreements. Upon this is built the mass of "intangible capital," of bills, notes, mortgages, and so on, which signify the social relation of creditor and debtor. Without this legal institution of contracts the extension of the market is but an empty phrase, just as production is meaningless without ownership of the means and fruits of production.

Here, too, the American colonists had reached that stage of political development where contracts were recognised and enforced as property. It needed only the widening of markets to enable them to use this institution long since evolved in the law of England.

Back of contracts is the characteristic element of modern class conflict, the conflict of bargaining power. It is the conflict of buyer and seller, epitomised in prices. Through the gradual extension of markets this conflict breaks up into layers of functional classes, each conducting its peculiar bargain with opposing classes. The price-bargain of the merchant and consumer, the capitalistic bargain of investor and banker, the rental bargain of landlord and tenant, the wage-bargain of employer and employé, are all differentiations of the primitive price-bargain.

19 Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*; see also Engels, *Origin of the Family*, 138.

20 Marx, *Capital*, I, chap. xxvii.

21 Hobson, *Evolution of Modern Capitalism*, 17, 18; Unwin, *Industrial Organization of the 16th and 17th Centuries*, chap. viii.

It is the unfolding of these bargaining classes that serves to co-ordinate the production and market theories of class struggle. Bargaining power is that union of production and marketing, of property and contract, which determines values.

This union is peculiarly clarified in American colonial history, for here the older institutions were lacking which, in Europe, served somewhat to conceal the purely economic evolution of bargaining classes. There was here no "town economy" in the European sense, for there were no guilds of merchants and craftsmen to acquire the political powers of taxation, police, and even military defence, and thereby to cover up the mere bargaining functions of buying and selling. There were no established feudal and ecclesiastical institutions with their hostility to merchant and capitalist, and even slavery and indentured service were gauged by commercial standards of mercantile profit. Nor was modern capitalism introduced by the Marxian process of expropriation of a wage-earning proletariat from the soil,[22] for land was abundant and almost free.

Lacking these non-economic, inherited, and dominant institutions or privileges of Europe, free competition in an ever-widening market was permitted to work out its purely economic results. Consequently, the principle of classification by which the stages of economic evolution in America should be distinguished, is the appearance of new bargaining functions and bargaining classes, and the "class struggle" must be explained upon the basis of all the factors which weakened or strengthened the bargaining power of classes. Fundamentally these factors were the mode of production and the extent of the market, that is private property and private contract; but more immediately and directly they were the nature of the bargain itself, the period and risk of investment in capital, the level of competition, and the amount of protection against competition. These factors will appear as we sketch briefly the emergence of bargaining classes.

22 See Marx, *Capital*, I, chap. xxvii, on "Expropriation of the Agricultural Population from the Land."

CHAPTER II

DEVELOPMENT OF BARGAINING CLASSES

Price-wage Bargain. Separation of industry from agriculture marked by price-wage barganinig, 32. Bücher's distinction between itinerant and home worker, 33. Nature of income distinguishes itinerant from stationary worker, 34.

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1 A considerable part of the data used in the following analysis is also found in Johnson's *History of Domestic and Foreign Commerce of the United States;* Clark's, *History of Manufactures in the United States,* and in the forthcoming Farnam's *History of Social Legislation.* It is evident that this apparent overlapping is unavoidable, for the same data must (especially in economic history), be resorted to no matter what phase of social and economic evolution is described. Thus, a history of commerce calls forth this material to illustrate the commercial development of the country; a history of manufactures, to indicate the progress of manufacturing; a history of social legislation, to explain the extent to which society reacted to the economic changes; and a history of labour, to delineate the separation of economic functions and the consequent emergence of new bargaining classes, so as to account for the origin of the persistent antagonism between "capital and labour."

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THE first separation of industry from agriculture took the form of the wage-bargain. But the wage-bargain was not distinguished from the price-bargain. The dominant factor in both was the ultimate consumer, the farmer. Neither wages nor prices were looked upon as means of securing either profit or interest on capital. The employer of labour was the ultimate consumer, and labourers were employed for the satisfaction of wants, not for the acquisition of profit. The same employer was a buyer of articles of consumption, but these were produced and sold directly by labourers, and the prices they received were not looked upon as a source of profit or interest, but as compensation for labour. The difference between wages and prices consisted in the fact that in the case of wages the labourer had no operating expenses, especially no expenses for raw material. Thus his compensation for labour was the gross income which he received from the employer-consumer. However, in the case of prices, the labourer's compensation was his net income dependent upon the margin between the price received from the consumer and the price paid for raw material. In both cases the labourer was looked upon as receiv-

ing only wages for personal services and the employer-consumer as receiving services for his personal use. The labourer was both merchant and labourer — merchant as the seller and labourer as the producer. The employer was both merchant and consumer — merchant as buyer and consumer as user. Neither the merchant function nor the employer function was as yet separated independently, and it required the entire colonial period and a wide extension of markets to differentiate these two classes of middleman functions so that they could be distinguished in their modern proportions.

It is this practical identity of the price-bargain and the wage-bargain that serves to explain many colonial industrial policies and it was the late differentiation of the two that constituted the labour movement.

Bücher uses the term "wage-work" (Lohnwerk) to designate this primitive identity of wages and prices, and the terms "itinerancy" (Stör) and "home-work" (Heimwerk) to distinguish the worker whose compensation is measured by gross income from the one whose compensation is measured by net income.

"Whereas all industrial skill has hitherto been exercised in close association with property in land and tillage, the adept house labourer now frees himself from the association, and upon his technical skill founds for himself an existence that gradually becomes independent of property in land. But he has only his simple tools for work; he has no business capital. He therefore always exercises his skill upon raw material furnished him by the producer of raw material, who is at the same time the consumer of the finished product.

"Here again two distinct forms of this relationship are possible. In one case the wage-worker is taken temporarily into the house, receives his board and, if he does not belong to the place, his lodging as well, together with the daily wage; and leaves when the needs of his customer are satisfied. . . . [We] may accordingly designate the whole industrial phase as that of *itinerancy* (Stör), and the labourer carrying on work in this manner as the *itinerant* (Störer). . . . On the other hand, the wage-worker may have his own place of business, and the raw material be given out to him. For working it up he receives piece-work wage. . . . We will designate this form of work *home work*. It is met with chiefly in industries that demand permanent means of production difficult to transport, such as mills, ovens, weavers' looms, forges,

etc. . . . From the point of view of development these two forms of wage-work have different origins. Itinerant labour is based upon the exclusive possession of aptitude for a special kind of work, homework upon the exclusive possession of fixed means of production. . . ." [2]

This distinction is true only in certain kinds of industry and in others is artificial. It is true of shoemakers, but we find weavers who are itinerant workers and others who are home workers. While a blacksmith has "exclusive possession of fixed means of production," he also has "exclusive possession of aptitude for a special kind of work." A more apt distinction would be one that disregards skill, and is based on whether or not fixed capital is required. Industries requiring fixed capital might be designated as stationary, in contradistinction to those whose capital consists of movable tools.

Although the possession of capital, in later times, clearly distinguishes the stationary from the itinerant worker, yet in the first separation from agriculture there was but little difference in their bargaining power. Labour was scarce, especially skilled labour, and it was this scarcity of skill that enabled the labourer to command capital as well as wages. Physical capital, whether in the form of movable tools or of stationary equipment, was not looked upon as a means of securing profit but rather as an opportunity for securing wages. This being so, there was little, if any, distinction between prices and wages, between the price-bargain of the merchant and the wage-bargain of the labourer. Both were summed up in the price-bargain. The skilled labourer was merchant as well as labourer.

BARGAINING POWER

The possession of industrial skill enabled the itinerant to separate himself from the unskilled and to become a stationary worker, leaving the unskilled to perpetual itinerancy. The itinerant shoemaker, instead of going to the home of the consumer, sets up his own shop and the consumer comes to him. Like other stationary workers — blacksmith, weaver, or baker — he takes orders, furnishes work place, tools, equipment, and

[2] Bücher, *Industrial Evolution*, 162–164. Italics are the author's.

perhaps raw material, and completes a product which the consumer carries away. This characteristic, common to stationary workers, indicates closer settlement, increased population, the beginnings of industrial centres, and may be described as the custom-order stage of the price-wage bargain. Those industries which require fixed capital from the start begin their career at this stage of bargaining; those which require only hand tools begin with wage-bargaining and proceed to custom-orders.

While the essential nature of the bargain in the custom-order stage consists in the remuneration solely of labour and not in profits or compensation for the use of capital, yet this stage furnishes to the wage-worker an advantage in bargaining power above that possessed by the itinerant. The itinerant plied his trade by wandering from job to job, hiring out to whoever needed his services, receiving wages for his labour, while his customer supplied the raw materials, workplace, lodging, and food. His function was to do the skilled work and to direct the farmer and his family in doing the unskilled part. At the outset he was at little disadvantage, since labour was relatively scarce, but, with an increase in the supply of labour, there appeared his inherent disadvantage in bargaining with the employer-consumer. He was dependent upon his customer for raw material, workplace, lodging, and food. He worked without the convenience and equipment necessary for speedy and efficient work. He had to seek the customer, and had no opportunity for organisation. Besides, he had no political influence, since property qualifications for suffrage prevailed throughout the colonial period.

Increase in population and the consequent growth of towns opened an avenue of relief to the itinerant mechanic. If he had a little money he could now set up his own shop and even provide the raw material. Towns made exchange easier and the farmer could get cash for his staple, with which he could buy whatever he needed. It was now cheaper for him to let the mechanic provide the raw material than to manufacture it himself.

The transition from the stage of the itinerant, working up the raw material belonging to his customer in the home of the

latter, to the stage of the settled shoemaker working up his own material in his own shop to the order of his customer, is illustrated by the provision taken from a charter, modelled upon the British guilds of the time, and issued to the shoemakers of Boston in 1648: "No shoomaker shall refuse to make shooes for any inhabitant, at reasonable rates, of their owne leather, for the use of themselves & families, only if they be required thereunto." [3] Although the charter recognised that the shoemakers need not go to their customer's house to do the work, it nevertheless made a concession to those who were accustomed to the old order, and were in a position to supply the raw material.[4]

The handicraftsman now made his wares at his own shop to the order of his customer. His market was a custom-order market, composed of his neighbours. His product, in the terminology of the day, was a "bespoke" product. He was in his own person master, custom-merchant, journeyman. He was an incipient capitalist, buying his raw material and owning his fixed capital.

SUPERIOR BARGAINING POWER OF MECHANICS IN INDUSTRIES

But while in the custom-order stage the itinerant industries became stationary, yet the bargaining advantage of the mechanic was less than in those industries which started at the custom-order stage. He was menaced by itinerants, and, as a large initial capital investment was not needed, he was more open to competition from other mechanics. With the industries which had their inception at the custom-order stage the reverse was true. Since a considerable initial capital was necessary to found such a business, they were more secure from competition, neither were they menaced by itinerants. This condition strengthened their bargaining power and made it possible for them to obtain concessions from the communities where they located. Hence the accumulation of capital in the

[3] Commons, Industrial Stages, Classes, and Organisations, in *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, III, 21.

[4] Europe, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, imposed penalties on guild members who refused to work in the house of their customers. See Bücher, *Industrial Evolution*, 169.

hands of mechanics, which made stationary industry possible, was brought about by protective policies which the agricultural interests were forced to adopt on account of the scarcity of capital and mechanical skill. The bearing of this fact both upon the Marxian theory of expropriation and upon the market theory of strengthening the bargaining power of classes is sufficient to warrant briefly a notice of the methods by which it was attained.

The colonies needed manufactured goods; and since there was a lack of mechanics, or at least of mechanics with enough capital to undertake such ventures in view of the hazards of developing new markets, and since the supply of raw material was uncertain, it was necessary to offer inducements. These came in the form of financial aid and privileges, as well as legislative provisions for securing cheap raw material. In the main the colonial governments made these grants, although individuals occasionally supplied capital by subscription.[5]

One method of supplying capital was through government loans or government credit. Massachusetts granted a loan to encourage glass manufacture.[6] Pennsylvania made a loan of 200 pounds to John Hewson to enable him to "enlarge and carry on the business of calico printing and bleaching" within the state.[7] The General Court of Rhode Island as late as 1728 authorised 3,000 pounds of bills of credit to be struck off and loaned for the establishment of a cloth factory.[8] The Maine legislature aided to the extent of 450 pounds in the erection of a factory for the manufacture of steel.[9] The Virginia House of Burgesses assisted in the development of iron mines by grants of land and construction of roads.[10] Exemption from taxation was also a favourite means of stimulating investment of capital in industry. Virgina exempted all persons and property devoted to mining and smelting iron.[11] Massachusetts also made tax exemptions.[12]

5 See *Doc. Hist.*, II, 326, for instances of subscription by individuals.

6 Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, I, 171, 178; see also Anderson, *Historical and Chronological Deduction of the Origin of Commerce*, II, 496.

7 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures* (3d ed. rev. and enlarged), I, 407.

8 *Ibid.*, I, 334, 335.

9 Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, I, 200.

10 Coman, *Industrial History of the United States*, 71; for additional instances see also Bogart, *Economic History of the United States*, 100.

11 Coman, *Industrial History of the United States*, 70.

12 See Massachusetts, *Records*, II, 61.

A method of encouraging industrial pursuits which could be carried on practically without any capital was that of granting bounties. This method was used in order to induce mechanics to practise their trade, as well as to stimulate household manufacture and mechanical improvements. In 1640 Massachusetts provided bounties "for the encouragement of the manufacture of cotton, wollen and linnen cloth." [13] Bedford County, Pennsylvania, offered a premium of 5 pounds for the first fulling mill in the county; 3 pounds for the finest and best piece of linen, 40 and 20 shillings for the second and third best, and 20 shillings for the weaver of the finest piece before October.[14] The Pennsylvania Legislature in 1788 awarded 100 pounds to a person who introduced a machine for carding cotton.[15] To encourage fishing the Massachusetts General Court provided "that whosoever shall apply themselves to set forward the trade of fishing, as Fisher-men, Marriners and Shipwrights, shall be allowed, man for man, or some, or other of the Labourers of the Countrey, to plant and reape for them, in the season of the yeare, at the publike charge of the Commonwealth, for the space of these seven years next ensuing; and such Labourers to be appointed and paid by the Treasurer of the Commonwealth." [16] As an inducement for a shoemaker to migrate to Massachusetts Bay in 1629 "the community gave him fifty acres of land and £10 a year for his services." [17] For a time Virginia exempted mechanics from levies of all kinds, if they followed their trade only.[18]

Legislation was also enacted to supply mechanics with cheap raw materials. This, of course, was also to the advantage of the consumer, since in the early stages of production the wages of the mechanics are determined mainly by the difference between the cost of raw material and the price paid by the consumer. If the raw material costs less the price of the commodity is reduced in proportion.[19]

13 Lord, *Industrial Experiments in British Colonies of North America*, in *Johns Hopkins University Studies*, XVII (extra vol.), 127.

14 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, I, 381.

15 *Ibid.*, 402.

16 Force, *Tracts and Other Papers*, III, No. 9, p. 6; see also Morgan (ed.), *Connecticut as a Colony and as a State*, II, 263–266.

17 Coman, *Industrial History of the United States*, 66.

18 Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia*, II, 411, 412. See also advertisement for white labor in *Doc. Hist.*, II, 348, 349.

19 See below, I, 39, 42.

The fact that other products were more profitable in part caused the scarcity of raw material. Bounties were offered to counteract this tendency. Thus New Jersey awarded bounties on hemp and flax.[20] Another cause of scarcity was the carelessness of those who thoughtlessly destroyed raw material. The Massachusetts General Court in 1640 found it necessary to order that every hide be sent to a tannery under penalty of 12 pounds.[21] These were but minor and temporary difficulties. The chief source of evil was the merchant shipper, who depleted the country of raw materials which were in great demand in England. Because "some persons, more seeking their own advantage, then the good of the publick, do transport raw hides and pelts," Massachusetts declared that no raw hide, skin, pelt, or leather unwrought should be exported.[22] Absolute prohibition of exportation or the imposition of heavy export duties was resorted to in order to make the raw material available for home manufactures. Hides, leather, wool, beaver, and other furs, lumber of various kinds, like shingles, staves, ship timber and planks, tar, pitch, rosin, and iron ore were mainly the objects of this sort of legislation.[23] The purpose is generally stated in the preamble of the act. Thus in 1663 New Haven restricted the exportation of tanned hides and leather "upon information of ye complaints of sundrie, of the difficulty of obtaining shooes for ye supply of the necessityes of their families by reason of the sending away of hides & leather out of this jurisdiccion."[24] New Hampshire in 1718 prohibited the exportation of iron ore in order to assure a supply for those who have "advanced a stock for the setting up and erecting several furnaces and mills for the refining and working up of the said ore."[25] Pennsylvania even prohibited the exportation "of manufacturing machines the scarcity of which was the great obstacle to such undertakings."[26]

Besides loans, tax exemptions, bounties, and provisions for cheap raw material, mechanics also expected exclusive mo-

20 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, I, 362.

21 Coman, *Industrial History of the United States*, 67.

22 Massachusetts, *Colonial Laws*, 1660-1672, 157.

23 Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, I, 308; and elsewhere; Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia*, I, 304–486.

24 New Haven, *Records*, 1653–1665, 489.

25 New Hampshire, *Laws*, II, 336.

26 Pennsylvania, *Statutes at Large*, XIII, 58.

nopolies of manufacture when investing their capital in establishments requiring unusually large sums. Massachusetts in 1644 granted a monopoly for 21 years for the manufacture of iron;[27] in 1698 a monopoly for 14 years for the manufacture of salt was issued;[28] and in 1724 a monopoly was given for 10 years for the manufacture of canvas or duck.[29] Similarly Casco Bay, Maine, granted an exclusive privilege for a saw mill in 1659, and in the same year Worcester licensed a fulling mill.[30]

These industries manufactured bulky material, making it costly to ship it any distance under primitive means of transportation. Their patronage emanated from the local market only. Consequently a monopoly of manufacture was equivalent to a prohibitive tariff.

In cases where comparatively large quantities of capital were at stake, and a monopoly of manufacture was not a sufficient guaranty against competition, protective tariffs were resorted to. "The General Court of Virginia in 1662 enacted that after the first of September, 1663, no salt should be imported into the county of Northampton under penalty of confiscation of ship and goods to the end that E. S. who hath erected a salt-work in those parts may be encouraged in his endeavours to promote the good of the country."[31] In order to encourage and aid in the production of salt by three citizens, Massachusetts Bay in 1695 placed a duty of 10 shillings per hogshead.[32] Virginia at one time also adopted a sweeping law that no one should be permitted to buy imported merchandise, whether on board ship or on shore, unless it were intended for personal use.[33] Connecticut followed a similar policy for a short period and absolutely forbade the retailing of foreign goods.[34]

This form of protection was necessary only in the early history of the colonies. Controversies between the colonists and the mother country led to non-importation agreements and a

27 Massachusetts, *Records*, II, 61.
28 Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, I, 398.
29 *Ibid.*, II, 496.
30 *Ibid.*
31 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, I, 286.
32 Massachusetts Bay, *Acts and Resolves*, I, 230, 231.
33 Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia*, II, 359; Hening (ed.), *Statutes at Large of Virginia*, I, 150, 162.
34 Connecticut, *Records*, 1636–1665, 562; Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, I, 189.

patriotic appeal to buy articles of domestic workmanship only. These acts as well as the Revolutionary War itself, afforded American industry protection as effective as a prohibitive tariff.[35] Poor transportation facilities assured mechanics of freedom of competition at home. Roads, the chief means of communication, did not bring one centre into touch with another, but acted more as feeders for the local market from the surrounding country.[36] In a few instances during the period protection was granted against neighbouring colonies. In 1719 and 1744, New York levied a duty on empty casks "to discourage their importation, for by experience [it] is found to be very hurtful to the coopers."[37]

The protective measures enumerated above were enacted for the benefit of the farmer-consumer,[38] who needed manufactured products and could not obtain them through other channels. He was willing that the government should aid the mechanic because he desired these products. The preambles of the various protective acts are illustrative of this purpose. Virginia in 1632 declared that "it is . . . desired that all manufactors should be sett on work and encouraged in this colony."[39] Maryland in 1681 also "found by dayly experience that the exportacon of Leather Raw & undressed Tanned & untanned Hides & deare & Elk Skins, which are frequently exported & Carried out of this Province, tend much to the great hinderance of all Tanners Shoomakers & other Tradesmen whose Trades are supported & Carried on by Leather & Soe necessary to bee encouraged & advanced for the good & benefit of this Province, & all the inhabitants thereof being of great use . . ."[40]

After the War of Independence the country was open to competition from abroad. This marks the beginning of the modern policy of protection. Heretofore protection was designed to promote the founding of industries, hence financial aid and other grants were necessary. Provision had to be

35 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, I; 365–369; Coman, *Industrial History of the United States*, 96, 100–105; Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, I, 379, 389.

36 *Ibid.*, 340; Simons, *Social Forces in American History*, 32.

37 New York, *Colonial Laws*, I, 1022; III, 440.

38 By farmer-consumer is meant the landed classes. In New England and most of the Middle Colonies they were the small farmers, while in the Southern Colonies they were the planters.

39 Hening, *Statutes at Large of Virginia*, I, 307.

40 Maryland, *Archives*, VII, 206.

made also for a supply of raw material at reasonable prices, as beginners could not pay the prices that established competitors paid. In this early period it was necessary to stimulate the establishment of new industries, in the later period it was a question of maintaining the already established industries that were now in their infancy. During the Revolutionary War the foundations were firmly laid for American industry. Once it was well established and had a good supply of raw material, the only protection needed was against competition. Pennsylvania, therefore, in 1780, after declaring that during the Revolution many persons established plants to supply the needs of the people and that there was now danger of their products being undersold, laid duties on the following articles: vehicles and carriages, clocks, cards, harvesting tools, sugar, brewery products, food products, shoes and leather, silver, gold, pewter, tin, lead, copper, brass, cast iron, British steel, slit iron, nail rods, sheet iron, garments and hats, ropes, glass products, and sails.[41] Other States also protected their industries.[42] Rhode Island enacted a tariff quite as comprehensive as that adopted by Pennsylvania.[43] Even Virginia as late as 1788 levied duties on leather and its manufacture.[44]

From the quotations given above it will be noted that the early arguments for protection declared it necessary in order to secure a sufficient supply of manufactured commodities. Later the argument was also made that the establishment of new industries would give employment to the poor.[45] The farmers were enlisted by the additional argument that their products would find a home market in the prosperous industrial centres.[46] That this argument would not have appealed to the farmers in the early period is evident from the fact that bonuses and premiums were required to encourage them to raise the raw material needed by industry.

These instances indicate that the protective policy of the early colonial period was intended to benefit the country at

41 Pennsylvania, *Statutes at Large*, XII, 99–104.

42 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, I, 396.

43 See Rhode Island, *Records*, especially X, 115.

44 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, I, 463.

45 For other instances of this argument see Coman, *Industrial History of the United States*, 96–99.

46 Taussig, *Tarif History of the United States* (6th ed.), 70.

large and to make it self-sufficient. Other evidence also tends to substantiate our conclusion that strengthening the bargaining power of industrial classes was incidental, and that the welfare of other classes and the internal development of the country were the prime motives for enacting protective legislation. Whenever the interests of the remainder of the public clashed with those of the industrial classes, the interest of the latter were disregarded or subordinated. For instance, in Virginia agriculture afforded more profitable opportunities than most industrial pursuits,[47] and there even the paternalistic inducements of financial aid and other protection failed to attract capital and mechanics to some of the most important trades. Not succeeding by these measures and finding their services indispensable, Virginia, totally disregarding their own wishes, forced such mechanics as "brickmakers, carpenters, joiners, sawyers, and turners" to practice their trades by forbidding them "to take part in any tillage of the soil." [48] Similarly, Massachusetts, when troubled in 1646 by a scarcity of farm labour, impressed all manner of workmen into that service. The reason for the action was stated as follows: "Because ye harvest of hay, corne, flax, & hemp comes usually so neare togethr yt much losse can hardly be avoyded, it is ordered & decreed . . . that artificers or handicrafts men" be required to aid in the harvest when crops may be injured by delay.[49]

Again while monopolistic grants and other privileges were unavoidable for the establishment of industries, they were nevertheless limited in time. Massachusetts as early as 1641 declared it to be fundamental that "there shall be no monopolies granted or allowed among us, but of such new inventions as are profitable to the country, and that for a short time." [50] This policy was followed very rigidly.[51] Virginia as well as the other colonies pursued a similar policy.[52] In like manner

47 Coman, *Industrial History of the United States*, 68, 69.

48 Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia*, II, 411, 412.

49 Massachusetts, *Records*, II, 180; I, 124, 125, 147, 148, 158.

50 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, I, 434.

51 See Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, I, 398; II, 496; Massachusetts, *Records*, II, 61.

52 See Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, I, 286, as well as other authors quoted.

prohibitions and tariffs on exports and imports were limited in time, being enacted whenever necessity demanded.[53]

Thus we see that in order to develop industry the mechanic was carefully guarded from competition and exempted from taxes and public charges. He was granted land, rights to other natural resources, monopoly privileges, aided in securing raw materials, and protected against the merchant-shipper. Public monies were loaned him without interest. Thus the capitalistic system in industry starts out with protection. Without government aid it is hardly possible that even primitive industry could thrive. Even Karl Marx, so staunch an exponent of the theory of original accumulation of capital through expropriation and exploitation, grants that those who originally took up petty industry accumulated the initial capital through their own unaided efforts at manual labour.[54] But it is safe to conclude that in this country petty industry was first separated from agriculture and, at its earliest inception, established chiefly by capital not accumulated by the efforts of the owner; that whether the capital was afterwards supplied by the owner or from other sources, the industry relied for its success upon government protection of the market, and that this strengthening of the bargaining power of the mechanical classes was consciously undertaken in the general interest of other classes.[55]

QUALITY OF WORK

In the custom-order stage of industry the three functions of merchant, master, and journeyman are united in the same

53 See Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, I, 409; Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia*, II, 461; Maryland, *Archives*, I, 495; and other authors cited.

54 Marx, *Capital*, I. Chaps. XXXI, XXXII, XXXIII.

55 This policy of assistance to weaker classes was not confined to industrial classes, as the following instance shows: Connecticut farmers were oppressed by merchant-shippers to whom they sold their produce. To protect them against this imposition a monopoly was granted to a firm of responsible shippers. The grievance as set forth in their own words reads: "Whereas through the blessing of the Lord upon the painful endeavors of these Plantations, encouragement has been given for the raising some quantity of corn, whereunto many hath addicted themselves upon hopes of receiving some comfortable supply to their necessities thereby; but partely through waint of oprtunity and fitte instruments to transport the same into forreigne prts, and prtely the advantages that have been taken from the multitude of sellers and their pinching necessity, the rate and price of corn is so little and the commodity so unvaluable for the attainment of such supplies as are most suitable to men's needs, that much discouragement falls upon the spirit of men in such employments, wch is like to be more and more increased if some course be not taken for the finding some other way of trade for corne than had been the hitherto attended." Connecticut, *Records*, 1636–1665, p. 116.

person. But it is the merchant function that sums up the other two, for it is the price-bargain that shifts the cost of production over to the consumer. The master, as such, looks to the merchant for his recompense for raw material, workshop, tools, and management, while the journeyman looks to him for the fund that will pay his wages.

When the three functions are thus combined in the same individual who actually does the work, the menace of competition springs from inferior quality of work. The journeyman's skill is his chief asset and its protection against competition is his prime interest. His tools, raw material, and shop are insignificant compared with the skill and the amount of work embodied in his product.

The competition of inferior quality is, therefore, his chief competitive menace. From the standpoint of the mere bargaining function of the merchant, he has an advantage in shifting his costs to the consumer. The bargain is a personal one and the customer gives his order before the goods are made. The price charged must therefore depend upon the quality of the product that it is agreed shall be made. If the customer is satisfied with an inferior quality the price is reduced accordingly. But the customer is less able to judge accurately of the quality than he is to compare prices. Consequently, in this stage of industry it is enough for the purpose of protecting his bargaining power, that the mechanic should direct attention to the quality of the product and should prevent the customer from having access to mechanics whose quality of workmanship is inferior. In this respect the situation is different from that of later stages based on the separation of classes to whom competition appears primarily as a menace to prices and wages, and only secondarily to quality.

In those industries that started out with itinerancy the itinerant remained as a competitive menace. In other industries requiring but little capital, and therefore not protected by privileges, the inferior workman had also access to customers. Here is where we find the first complaint in American history against the evils of competition, and this complaint was made by the "shoomakers of Boston" in 1648 against the "damage which the country sustaynes by occasion of bad ware made by some

of the trade." The coopers also made similar complaint at the same time, and both bodies of craftsmen asked the colonial legislature for authority to suppress the competition of inferior workers. They were granted charters with privileges similar to those of contemporaneous craft guilds in England. The officers of the guild were given authority to examine mechanics of their craft and to secure from the courts of the colony an order suppressing anyone whom they did not approve "to be a sufficient workman." They were also given authority to regulate the work of those who were approved and thus to "change and reform" the trade and "all the affayres thereunto belonging," and were made a branch of government with power to annex penalties and to "levy the same by distresse." [56]

These are the only two instances in this country, so far as revealed by a search of records, where craft guilds were created and endowed with power to regulate their trade and to use the powers of government to enforce these regulations.[57]

The other colonies, as far as it is possible to ascertain, granted no such legal authority to a body of mechanics. Similar protection was given them, however, through specific legislative enactments. The Long Island coopers petitioned in 1675 for protection against the competition of "strange coopers" who were inefficient workmen and who made "defective and insufficient caske," [58] but no protection was granted in that year. However, in 1680 the city of New York adopted an ordinance providing that "coopers, carpenters and smiths, &c., serve five years before being allowed to set up business" for themselves.[59] Thereafter other specific regulations were from time to time adopted by the colony.

[56] This charter is reproduced in *Doc. Hist.*, III, 20, note 2.

[57] As early as 1644, four years previous to the granting of charters to the shoemakers and coopers, the ship carpenters were informed by the Massachusetts General Court that it favoured "a company of that trade, according to the manner of other places, w^th^ power to regulate building of ships, & to make such orders & lawes amongst themselves as may conduce to the publike good, if any shall appear the next co^rt^ & psent lawes for consideration." (Massachusetts *Records*, II, 69.) For reasons unknown the ship carpenters did not avail themselves of this overture.

[58] New York City, *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York*, 1675–1776, I, 4; for other trades see Massachusetts, *Records*, II, 18; IV, pt. 2, pp. 303, 345; New York City, *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York*, VII, 177; Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia*, II, 482.

[59] Van Rensselaer, *History of New York City*, II, 220; O'Callaghan, *Calendar of New York Historical Manuscripts, English, 1664–1776*, pt. 2, p. 83.

Aside from the privileges granted by Massachusetts to the coopers and shoemakers for a short period, all the colonial regulations of quality were enforced by inspectors appointed by the authorities for that purpose. In many instances the mechanics succeeded in having inspectors chosen from among their fellow-craftsmen. This was particularly true in New York Colony. Thus in 1675 the tanners and curriers of the city of New York were instructed by the mayor and aldermen to meet and decide upon four names out of which three were to be chosen as inspectors of hides or leather.[60] In this year two bakers were also designated to supervise bread making and to determine what bakers were necessary.[61] Likewise in Albany a cooper was appointed surveyor of weights and measures in 1695;[62] and in 1689 a baker was made a viewer of corn.[63] It is not certain whether the inspectors in Massachusetts were men of the trade, but a law in 1641 providing for the inspection of ship-building declares that in case of dispute two ship carpenters are to judge whether the inspector's decision is just.[64]

The agricultural interests, being in control, grudgingly granted protection against the inferior worker and his bad wares. The charters of the Boston coopers and shoemakers, like the monopoly grants,[65] were limited in time, and remained valid only as long as the mechanics fulfilled their part without "enhancing the prices . . . or wages, whereby either our own people may suffer." The colonial authorities also took pains to protect the inhabitants from abuse of the powers contained in the charter. Determination of disputes, "in case of difficultie," was placed in the hands of the judges of the county, and appeals were allowed to the county court. Unless the farmer-consumer was certain this protection was to his benefit he refused it. Thus in 1668 the petition of the Boston coopers

60 New York City, *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York*, I, 21, 22, 24; with the names was also submitted the following statement:

"To the Worshipful the Mayor & Aldermen:

"Wee whose Names are hereunto Subscribed have Pursuant to your Commands made a Generall Meetinge And haue by a General Vote and Consent made Choice of fowre of our Number out of which his Honour may bee Pleased to make Choice of two for Tanners . . . [and] one for a Currier. . . ."

61 *Ibid.*, 65, 172.

62 Munsell, *Annals of Albany*, III, 13.

63 *Ibid.*, 218.

64 Massachusetts, *Records*, I, 337.

65 See above, I, 36.

for a renewal of their charter was denied on the ground that the laws had provided for rectifying many of the evils mentioned and, therefore, there was "no reason to determine anything further at present." [66] The following year, however, relief was again granted by establishing uniformity of staves and so on.[67] Likewise in 1672 a company of hatters was promised protection "when they shall make as good hats & sell them as cheap as are afforded from other parts." [68] Similarly when two curriers in 1666 prayed that the General Court do not permit tanners and shoemakers to do currying, their petition was rejected, apparently because there were not enough curriers to do that work.[69]

The foregoing examples of protective organisations and protective legislation in the custom-order stage represent, as already stated, the union in one person of the classes of merchant, master, and journeyman, later separated. Each of these classes has its peculiar function. The merchant-function controls the kind and quality of the work, and its remuneration comes from ability to drive the bargain with the customer in the process of adjusting price to quality. The master function, or more properly the employer function, on the other hand, controls the work place and the tools and equipment, and passes along to the journeyman the orders received from the merchant. The journeyman function, finally, is remunerated according to skill and quality of work, speed of output, and the amount and regularity of employment.

Thus from the standpoint of each of the functions that later were separated, these primitive mechanics, either through guilds or inspectors of their own class, set themselves against the "bad ware" of inferior workmen or itinerants. From the merchant standpoint the exclusion of bad ware removed a menace to remunerative prices for good ware. From the employer standpoint the exclusion of the itinerant transferred the

66 Massachusetts, *Records*, IV, pt. 2, p. 377.

67 *Ibid.*, 421.

68 *Ibid.*, 527.

69 *Ibid.*, 303; Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, I, 435. These jurisdictional disputes between different crafts were quite common in Europe, influenced by the desire of each craft to make more work for itself or to prevent another from encroaching upon its traditional work. See Unwin, *Industrial Organization in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, 20; Bücher, *Industrial Evolution*, 171.

ownership of the workshop and the medium of wage payments from the consumer to the producer. From the journeyman standpoint, the exclusion of the itinerant eliminated the truck-payment of wages in the form of board and lodging, by substituting piece wages for the finished product. And this control of the finished product through all the stages of production gave a double advantage to the craftsman. In the case of itinerant industries, the unskilled parts of the work hitherto done by the customer's family, were transferred to him, and thus by one stroke he was able both to increase the amount of his work and to utilise the bargaining leverage of his skill to get skilled wages for unskilled work.[70]

PRICES AND WAGES

As the regulations of quality generally benefited both the consumer and producer there was harmony between the two bargaining classes. However, in the matter of prices and wages their interests often clashed. Scarcity of capital, labour, and raw materials, as well as the monopolistic grants, frequently placed the consumer at a bargaining disadvantage in his dealings with producers of commodities. This accounts for the numerous regulations of quantities, prices, and wages. Naturally the producers resented this unsolicited interference, occasionally even revolting against the governmental authorities. It is these

70 Regulations of quality were also used to strengthen the bargaining power of producers of extractive commodities. This took the form of standardising the quality of products for exportation, and thus maintaining a reputation for quality and honesty. Laws were enacted relative to the quality of particular staples, the quantity of the individual packages, and the manner of packing. To "prevent the exportation of bad tobacco" Virginia provided for its inspection and for destroying whatever was found below standard. (Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia*, I, 304; see also Virginia, *Statutes at Large*, (ed. by Hening), VI, 154, *et seq.*) Similar laws applied to tar, pitch, turpentine, pork, beef, and flour. (Virginia, *Statutes at Large*, (ed. by Hening), VI, 146, *et seq.*) New York adopted regulations regarding export of flour and bread. (New York, *Colonial Laws*, V, 197, 198, 833.) Pennsylvania had timber inspectors whose duty it was to inspect all planks, masts, boards, staves, and other wood products, and condemn all unsound timber. (Pennsylvania, *Statutes at Large*, V, 400, *et seq.*)

Regulation of quality during Colonial times was widespread. The farmer had been accustomed to supervise the manufacture of most of the commodities he used, and now that they were no longer prepared under his roof he turned to the government to fulfill that function. Maryland empowered each county to appoint six knowing persons, whose duty it should be to inspect and seal all shoes and hides, and imposed a penalty on anyone attempting to sell inferior goods. (Maryland, *Archives*, XIX, 183; see also New York, *Colonial Laws*, V, 71, 193; Pennsylvania, *Statutes at Large*, II, 90–91.) Pennsylvania required that timber used for casks must be from white oak and well seasoned. (Pennsylvania, *Statutes at Large*, II, 95, *et seq.*)

revolts of master merchants that have erroneously been called strikes of wage-earners.

Since the customer often furnished the raw material, and since interest and profit on capital were not taken into account, the wages of the mechanic or even the merchant might appear indifferently under the name "wages," "profits," "tolls," "rates," or "prices." That there was no clear distinction in the separate use of these terms is illustrated in the wording of some of the acts: A Massachusetts law of 1638 reads: "It is ordered, that the freemen of ev'y town shall, from time to time, as occasion shall require, agree amongst themselves about the prices & rates of all workmen, laborers, & servants wages; & every other pson, inhabiting in any towne, whether workeman, laborer, or servants, shall-bee bound to the same rates w^{ch} the said freeman, or the greater pte, shall bind themselues vnto." [71] As late as 1818 the New York Legislature still used prices and wages synonymously when, in the act incorporating the New York City journeymen printers, it inserted a clause forbidding them to regulate "the price or wages of labor or workmen, or any other articles." [72]

The regulation of prices and wages was, of course, in many cases inseparable from the regulation of quantities. Therefore, the size of casks, barrels, bricks, bar iron, and so on was determined by statute.[73]

The following are instances of price and wage regulations: Pennsylvania in 1721 finding "the price of leather . . . very exorbitant and burdensome to the people of the province . . ." regulated it by law.[74] Connecticut regulated the price of hides, as well as shoes.[75] Virginia regulated the prices of blacksmiths.[76] Massachusetts ordered in 1633 that "noe psons shall sell to any of the inhabitants within this jurisdiction any pvision, cloathing e tooles, or other comodities, above the rate ffoure pence in a shilling more then the same cost or

71 Massachusetts, *Records*, I, 183.

72 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 79.

73 Massachusetts Bay, *Acts and Resolves*, I, 682, 49; Maryland, *Archives*, XIX, 104; New York, *Colonial Laws*, I, 554.

74 Pennsylvania, *Statutes at Large*, III, 257, *et seq.*

75 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, I, 438; Connecticut, *Records*, 1665–1677, p. 325.

76 Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia*, II, 419; Hening, *Statutes at Large of Virginia*, II, 11.

might be bought for ready money in England." [77] The United Colonies of Connecticut in 1677 declared "that no tanner shall haue any more for tanning any hide than two pence upon the pownd for green hides, and fowre pence upon the pownd for dry hides." [78] Likewise some of the colonies regulated the prices of iron, sugar, bread, and shoes.[79] As late as 1786 the Georgia General Assembly regulated wages of owners of the stationary industry of milling. In this case the act provided that "owners or occupiers of mills" in grinding grain "may take for toll one eighth part thereof and no more." [80] Similarly, Massachusetts regulated the wages of saw-mill owners by declaring "that the owners shall have one-half for sawing the other half." [81]

Just as the wages of the owners of stationary industries were regulated because of their bargaining advantage, so, whenever itinerant workers were scarce, their wages were also regulated in order to offset the demands for "excessive pay." In New England scarcity of labour "annoyed those farmers and employers who were obliged to go beyond their own families for assistance." [82] Massachusetts responded by specific wage regulations. In 1630, "it was ordered that carpenters, joyners, brickelayers, sawers, and thatchers shall not take above 2 s. a day, nor any man shall giue more, vnder paine" of a fairly heavy

77 Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, I, 119; Massachusetts, *Records*, I, 111.

78 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, I, 438; Connecticut, *Records*, 1665–1677, p. 325.

79 Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, II, 791, 794; Rhode Island, *Records*, VIII, 133; Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia*, II, 476, 477; *Doc. Hist.*, II, 346.

80 *Ibid.*, 346.

81 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, I, 97. The charter for the erection of a saw mill in the town of Scituate, 1656 provided "that in case any of the townsmen do bring any timber into the mill to be sawed, the owners of the mill shall saw it . . . and they shall have the one half for sawing the other half. And in case any man of the town, that doth not bring any timber to the mill to be sawed, shall want any boards for his own particular use, the owner of the mill shall sell him boards for his own use . . . for the country pay, at three shillings and six pence an hundred inch sawn." *Ibid.*; Massachusetts, *Historical Society, Collections*, 2d ser., IV, 249. Connecticut also legislated as follows in 1677: "It is ordered that after the first of May next, noe shoemaker shall take aboue fiue pence halfe penny a size for all playne wooden heeld shoes from all sizes aboue the men's seuens, three soled shoes well made and wrought, nor aboue seuen pence halfe penny a size for well wrought French falls. And euery shoemaker shall haue by him a true and just size or measure, and accordingly marke his shoes in the usual manner; and if any shoemaker shall marke his shoes or ware with a falls size or measure, to abuse or wroung the buyer, or shall sell aboue the price aboue sayd, he shall forfeit such shoes or ware." Connecticut, *Records*, 1665–1677, p. 325.

82 Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, I, 334.

fine. The wages of master mechanics and labourers were also regulated, and if "they haue meate and drinke" the pay was to be proportionately less. Wage regulations were also enacted to apply to "sawers," "wheelewrights," "tylers," "mowers," masons and "taylors." [83] From the provisions of the laws it is certain that they were intended to regulate itinerant workers. If "they have meate and drinke" the wages were to be less. Not only were the wages of ordinary mechanics regulated, but those of "master mechanics" were also stipulated. These provisions would have been superfluous unless applied to itinerant workers.

Perhaps the most universal regulation of price, wage, quality, and weight was the "assize of bread." Massachusetts, in 1696, required that "every loaf-bread baker shall have a distinct mark for his bread, and keep the due assizes hereafter expressed, as well for what he bakes for sale, as to be spent in his family, that is to say, the assize of bread shall be rated according to the middle price of wheat, not to be altered, but upon the increasing or decreasing of six pence in the sale of a bushel; the penny loaf to weigh by avoirdupois, as is hereafter mentioned, according to the different prices of wheat by the bushel." [84]

The dissatisfaction of the bakers, because of these regulations, is shown in their action. Several times they deemed it necessary to request new assizes. Thus in 1691 "the [New York City] Bakers appearing declareing Wheate to be Dearer than formerly moue this Court for a new Assize." [85] Similarly the bakers in Massachusetts in 1679 petitioned the Court to be relieved from the restrictions of the assize, for, under its provision, it was impossible for them to earn a livelihood. The Court responded by appointing a committee "to consider & make an experiment, whither the prizes of wheate & assizes of

83 Massachusetts, *Records*, I, 74, 76, 77, 79, 84, 91, 109, 127, 183; Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, I, 173, 179, 334; Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia*, I, 589; II, 416, 417; Ames, *Some Peculiar Laws and Customs of Colonial Days, A Paper read before the Pennsylvania Society of the Order of the Founders and Patriots of America* (1905), 13; Coman, *Industrial History of the United States*, 49.

84 Massachusetts Bay, *Acts and Resolves*, I, 252, 253; see also Pennsylvania, *Statutes at Large*, II, 61–63; Smith, *The City of New York in 1789*, 100; Munsell, *Annals of Albany*, III, 12; copy of a typical price list is reprinted in *Doc. Hist.*, II, 343.

85 New York City, *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York*, I, 254.

bread stated in the law be not such as the bakers may liue by, and that they make a returne of their proceedings therein to the sessions of this Court in October next, the charge of the committee to be borne by the bakers." [86] In the foregoing instances, as well as in others, relief was granted.

That the bakers chafed under these governmental restrictions is shown by several refusals to comply with the assizes. In 1696 it was necessary for the authorities of the city of New York to order bakers to have bread for sale.[87] The statement of the Charleston, South Carolina, bakers in 1786 sets forth the grievances of the bakers. It reads:

"To the Public: This is to give notice that we, the Bakers of this City unanimously shall stop baking after this day the 13th inst., at which time the late ordinance of the City Council is to take place, as we find that we cannot in justice to the support of our trade or families, comply therewith. Since the City Council have had the regulating the assize of bread, instead of granting us a redress of grievances complained of in our former petitions, they have repealed all former acts, and to bake up to the present assize is not in our power, for they require a greater quantity of baked bread out of a hundred flour than it will really make, without allowing anything for the support of ourselves and families." [88]

The alleged strike of bakers in New York City in 1741,[89] as well as other similar instances, illustrates the fundamental distinction between early master merchant associations designed to protect prices and later journeymen societies designed to maintain wages. The strike in question was rather a revolt of master merchants against regulation of prices by public authorities than a strike of journeymen to maintain wages against employers. Unfortunately a search of records in the City Hall of New York failed to reveal any reference to this incident. The original source for the statement regarding the bakers' strike of 1741 is probably contained in the argument of counsel in the New York Cordwainers' case of 1809. Reference is there made to "information which was preferred in the year

86 Massachusetts *Records*, V, 222, 272, 317, 322, 323, 498, 499.

87 New York City, *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York*, I, 405, 406, 407, 418.

88 *Doc. Hist.*, II, 343, 344.

89 See *Report on Strikes and Lockouts*, 1887, pp. 1029, 1030.

1741, against certain bakers, for combining not to bake bread but on certain terms." [90] By comparing this statement with the known action of the bakers previous to and after 1741, it is evident that the bakers were organised to resist the assize. According to the *Minutes* of the Common Council of the City of of New York a new bread assize was adopted on December 29, 1740.[91] It is probable that the bakers considered this assize oppressive and, having resisted the authorities before, decided to do it again. At any rate it is certain that bread assizes were enforced in New York City later than 1741,[92] and that even after the adoption of the constitution the master bakers in New York refused to bake because the assize established by the local authorities was too stringent.[93]

In their complaints [94] no mention is made by the bakers of either return on investment, interest on capital, or even replacement of equipment. Evidently they regarded their fixed capital as merely the physical opportunity to earn a living, and therefore did not expect to realize a profit on it or even any additional sum for its replacement and upkeep. Fixed capital or equipment in the custom-order stage (and early retail-shop stage) was a small and practically non-recurring expense, and could easily be disregarded by the master baker in computing his cost, since it did not materially affect income. He could ordinarily rely upon his savings from earnings to keep up and replace equipment. He could even afford to overlook small items in operating expense on the same ground. But, with large amounts of circulating capital or operating expenses, the chief item of which was raw material, it was different. This was a constantly recurring and heavy expense, and unless included in price it would more than eat up the income of the merchant, which came primarily from his own labour. Hence the merchant was obliged to insist on a price that would cover operating expenses on the cost of raw material, as well as compensation for his labour. Both the Boston and the Charleston bakers attacked the assize because it did not allow a sufficient margin "for the support of ourselves and families," after deducting

90 *Doc. Hist.*, III, 16, 309; see also 326–328.

91 *Minutes*, I, 406, 407, 418; V, 15.

92 Smith, *The City of New York in 1789*, p. 100.

93 *Doc. Hist.*, II, 344.

94 See above, I, 52, 53.

cost for operating expenses, the chief item of which, in their case, was flour.

The legislature also held the prevailing opinion, that earnings on capital and replacement of equipment were not to be considered as legitimate items of cost. Thus in response to the complaint of the Boston bakers that they could not make a living under the established assize, the Massachusetts court created the committee above mentioned with instructions to consider whether the assizes of bread stated in the law "be not such as the bakers may live by." The court, as representing the public and consumer, recognised the justice of allowing a reasonable margin between the cost of raw material and the price of finished product as compensation for the labour of the baker. On the other hand it did not even occur to the bakers to demand, nor to the court to explain, why allowance should not be made for earnings on, and upkeep and replacement of, fixed capital. While a margin was expected and allowed for replacement of large outlays of circulating capital, neither the bakers nor the public considered it unjust not to allow interest or profit on it. In short, capital was regarded as giving its owner an opportunity to labour for a living, and therefore it did not occur to them to allow interest or a charge for its use.

Similar comments may be made upon the much earlier revolt of New York cartmen against a municipal ordinance. The licensed cartmen entered upon this alleged strike in 1677, when they "combined to refuse full compliance when ordered to remove the dirt from the streets for threepence a load." [95] The cartman, like the master baker, was evidently the owner of the physical capital, which he looked upon not as an investment but as an opportunity to earn wages. The wages which he received for his services were contingent upon the difference between the price and the cost of operation. Consequently, when the cartmen "combined to refuse full compliance," they acted in the dual capacity of merchants and labourers.[96]

[95] Van Rensselaer, *History of New York City*, II, 219; New York City, *Minutes of the Common Council*, I, 28, 64, 65, 135, 136.

[96] It should be noted, however, that certain modern trade unions, like the teamsters and musicians, retain features similar to those of the guilds, in that under certain circumstances they include employers within their organisation. In fact, the evolution of trade unionism is the separation of the wage-earner from the combined merchant, master, and journeyman functions of the guild. This belated

The differences between the consumer and master merchant as to prices are further illustrated by the prosecution in 1680 of the coopers of the city of New York, because they "subscribed a paper of combination not to sell casks except in accordance with rates established by themselves." [97] While the coopers were prosecuted for combining to raise prices, the authorities sympathised with their appeal to maintain the quality of their product. At the time of the prosecution a law was enacted, as stated above,[98] declaring that coopers must serve a five years' apprenticeship before they could set up an independent business.

RETAIL SHOP

In the early part of the custom-order stage of industry the journeyman was both master and merchant. Although industry was separated from agriculture, the industrial unit was isolated in the home shop of the individual worker. But with the growth of towns into cities [1] and an increase in rural population of the immediate neighbourhood, two parallel developments occurred. The master workman continued to take custom orders as before, but began to employ journeymen in addition to his own work. He also began to stock up with finished products made by the same journeymen for sale to sojourners and visitors. While the former is an extension of custom orders, the latter is an addition of the retail shop. Eventually two classes of work were performed by the same mechanics, a superior quality known as "bespoke work" for the higher and narrower level of custom-order, and an inferior quality, known as "shop work," for the lower and wider level of the retail trade.

From the standpoint of ownership and production the retail-shop stage introduced a change in the position of the journeyman. He retained his hand tools but lost ownership of the

unionism of the teamsters and musicians is described by Commons in *Labor and Administration*, and *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, XX, 419, *The Musicians of St. Louis and New York*, and in "Types of American Labor Organization—The Teamsters of Chicago," in *Trade Unionism and Labor Problems*, Chapter III, and *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, XIX, 400–433, May, 1905.

97 Van Rensselaer, *History of New York City*, II, 219; O'Callaghan, *Calendar of New York Historical Manuscripts, English*, 1664–1776, p. 83.

98 See I, 46.

1 New York City boasted of 5,000 inhabitants in 1695. Becker, *Beginnings of the American People*, 132.

shop and the raw material. Likewise he lost control of the market and the price-bargain. Thus we have two industrial classes: the journeyman, who owned no capital and depended upon his wages for a living; and the retail merchant-employer, who owned the capital, and, since he no longer performed manual labour, looked for his remuneration to his investment and his managerial ability.

Notwithstanding this separation of industrial classes, the cleavage was not horizontal between employer and labourer; it was vertical, between producer and consumer. The harmony between master merchant-employer and journeyman is explained by the restricted area of the market. Since the market was confined to the locality and all masters were confronted with similar conditions, it was comparatively simple to equalise competition among themselves by maintaining competitive standards. Equalising competitive conditions had a twofold effect. It obviated friction between master merchant and journeymen, and at the same time protected the former's income.

It was also easier for the retail merchant-employers to pass off reasonable increases in wages on the consumer, than to resist the demands of their journeymen. Lack of transportation facilities and other conditions practically isolated the various communities commercially. This gave the merchant an advantage over the consumer. Turnpikes were the prime means of communication. These did not bring one commercial centre into competition with another. They acted rather as a feed from the surrounding country for the local market.[2] On the other hand the small capital of the retail merchant-employer gave him little advantage over the journeymen. In case of dispute the waiting power of the journeymen was as great as that of their masters.

The journeymen were fully aware that wages could best be maintained and advances secured by co-operating with the retail merchant-employers in suppressing "unfair" competitors. Hence, we find them actively supporting their employers against

2 See particularly Weeden, *Economics and Social History of New England*, I, 340; Simons, *Social Forces in American History*, 32; Coman, *Industrial History of the United States*, 78–76; Bogart, *Economic History of the United States* 89–92.

those master merchants who refuse to abide by established standards.

At the height of his development the retail merchant-employer was no longer interested in protecting his workmanship by quality. His chief interest was to protect his capital and managerial ability. He was interested in quality only as it affected his profits. The menace that disturbed his peace was not "bad ware" but prices. This came about by the fact that he had considerable capital invested in raw material, finished stock, sales shop, and short credits. Consequently to him the price factor was important.

The menace of underselling manifested itself in many ways. The most alarming was the competition of cheap grades of goods offered for sale at the "public market," and of masters who offered bargain prices by public advertisement. The master cordwainers of Philadelphia organised in 1789 so as to be able to "consult together for the general good of the trade, and determine upon the most eligible means to prevent irregularities in the same." The qualifications for membership are set forth as follows: "No person shall be elected a member of this society, who offers for sale any boots, shoes, etc., in the public market of this city, or advertises the price of his work, in any of the public papers or hand-bills, so long as he continues in these practices." [3]

The following advertisements indicate the feeling towards a merchant who deviated from the customary practice. Everything possible was done to discredit an "unfair" competitor:

"At a Meeting of a large Number of Master Cordwainers of Philadelphia, held at the Academy the first instant, to consider a Publication in several of the Newspapers of this City, signed by *Peter Gordon, Prentice & Co.*, intimating that they, or one of them, had a new Method of making Boots, for which a Patent was obtained — several Depositions, taken before Clement Biddle, Esq., Notary Public, were produced, from which it appears, that Boots of a similar Kind, have been made in London, and other Parts of Europe, upwards of 30 years ago, and by several Cordwainers of this City, at different periods, near 20 years back. The Master Cordwainers of the city therefore take this method to inform their Customers, and the Public in general, that they are ready to make

[3] *Doc. Hist.*, III, 128; see also IV, 55.

what those Gentlemen call their *New invented Patent Boots,* when called for — But at the same time give it as their opinion, that they are by no means equal to such as are usually made when required for keeping out Water." [4]

In the controversy in question the non-conformists evidently realised the advertising advantage of such an episode and retorted with this polemical advertisement:

"Fifty Journeymen Cordwainers

"Wanted.

"By reason of the envious combination of the Philadelphia shoe-makers, we the subscribers, patent boot-makers . . . do hereby offer 1s. 6 more for making boots than is or may be hereafter currently given at any other factory at this city. None need apply but those who are well experienced at boots, and to such a constant employ shall be given for one year." [5]

The journeymen were not deceived by the liberal offer. They were even more distressed than the masters over such methods of competition. Knowing that if the masters were forced to reduce prices they would also be obliged to reduce wages, the journeymen allied themselves with them in this fight to suppress a competitor, who, by injuring their employer, would also injure them. This appears in the following advertisement:

"*To the Citizens of the United States in General — and to the Journeymen Cordwainers in particular.*

"Friends, and Brethren:

"As the following advertisement has appeared in the newspapers of this city, that, 'Fifty Journeymen Boot-Makers will find constant employment and generous wages, at the Patent Boot Ware House of Peter Gordon, Prentiss & Co., No. 44, Arch-street.'— This advertisement is the most fallacious and imprudent, that could have been introduced; calculated to deceive the journeymen, shoemakers, and mislead the public. Fifty journeymen boot-makers! — Extravagant indeed! — They might as well have said Five-hundred, for the one is as ridiculous as the other. Men should be careful of what they set forth to the world, when the subject is well known, and the circumstances well understood. It is a pity

[4] *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser,* June 15, 1791. Italics are in original.

[5] *Ibid.,* June 25, 1791. These advertisements were also inserted in other papers. See the Philadelphia *General Advertiser,* June 25 and 30, 1791. They were repeated from time to time.

that men do not confine themselves within the bounds of modesty and truth. Had they said five, this might have been believed. It is a query with us whether they could procure leather to employ such a number of hands, if the journeymen bestowed their labour. If each journeyman made a regular week's work, it would be one hundred and fifty pair a week, which would be seven thousand eight hundred pair a year — monstrous indeed! — But farther, we apprehend that its consequence may prove prejudicial to the public in general, as well as to the Cordwainers of the United States of America.

"Before we proceed to our remarks, we declare to the candid world, that we are not actuated by prejudice or partiality, but on the contrary, if we could see anything belonging to those Boots (as we are judges of the propriety or impropriety of the plan), that was meritorious, or of utility to the public, we would not oppose them, but promote every laudable purpose that would tend to the public interest.

"We proceed now to our remarks. First, the advertisement is the only proof that we have been able to obtain, that such a patent has been granted — Second, there are incontestible proofs that such boots have been made, before Peter Gordon made them, or, probably, before he was born; for such boots were made in this city twenty years ago, and have been made in Europe, till the fashion became obsolete — Thirdly, we do venture to pronounce that, in point of neatness, ease, and utility, this manner of having boots made is inferior to the way that boots have generally been made for many years past — Fourthly, it is calculated for monopolists who at any time can take the advantage of the public, as none dare make them but themselves, so they may exact at discretion. It is more than probable, they may contrive to find an *Antediluvian Shoe,* and get a patent for it, by which means they will cut off the whole of the fraternity from a necessary existence.

"The above observations appear to us important and just, and we think it our duty to offer them to the public at this period, hoping that by giving our sentiments free, we shall not give any person just cause of offence. We are the public's most humble servants.

"*By order of the Journeymen Cordwainers of the City and Liberties of Philadelphia.*

"William Welch, *Chairman.*" [6]

Other retail-merchant-employer associations found it necessary to resort to direct regulation of prices. These associations fixed prices either secretly, as the Pittsburgh cordwainers,[7] or

[6] *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser,* May 16, 1791. Italics are in original.

[7] *Doc. Hist.,* IV, 44, 55.

openly, as the Albany coopers.[8] The latter, for instance, made public a lengthy price list of coopers' wares.

WHOLESALE ORDER

Following the Revolutionary War a wave of enthusiasm for internal improvements spread through the country. "Banks were opened, canal companies were started, turnpike companies were chartered, and their stock subscribed in a few hours."[9] However, projects for avenues of communication of a national character, such as the Cumberland Road, were still in the stage of discussion.[10] All successful undertakings in improving transportation both by canal and turnpike were of a local nature.[11] As communication with the surrounding country was established by turnpikes and canals, the city retail merchant-employer began to take wholesale orders from country retail merchants. The following typical advertisement is descriptive of the marketing methods used by a city retail merchant in branching out as a wholesale merchant:

Earthen Ware Manufactory

"The subscriber takes the liberty of informing his friends and customers, that he continues carrying on Earthen Ware Manufactory . . . in all its various branches, and has on hand a large and general assortment of the first quality . . . which he will dispose of on the lowest terms, *either wholesale or retail,* for cash or the usual credit.

"Orders from the Country Storekeepers will be duly attended to and faithfully executed."[12]

The more wealthy and enterprising merchants sought orders in the newly developing markets of the West and South.

"In 1800 the high-peaked wagons with their white canvas covers, . . . were to be seen traveling westward on all the highways from New England to Albany and from Albany toward the Lakes. They [the emigrants] . . . built up towns, cultivated the land and sent back to Albany and Troy the yield of their farms. With them the merchants of the East kept up a close connection, exchanging rum,

8 Munsell, *Annals of Albany*, III, 150, 155.

9 McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, III, 462.

10 *Ibid.*, 462; Channing, *History of the United States*, III, 426; Bogart, *Economic History of the United States*, 186–194.

11 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II, 45, 51, 127; McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, III, 463, 556.

12 Philadelphia *Aurora*, Aug. 25, 1803. Italics are not in original.

and molasses, hoes, axes, iron pots, clothing, everything of which they stood in want, receiving lumber, wheat, pot and pearl ashes in return. . . .

"The second pathway on which thousands of emigrants rushed westward lay through the valley of the Ohio. As early as 1794 the trade between Pittsburg and Cincinnati had become so paying that a line of packet-boats began to ply between the two towns. They made the trip once a month." [13]

Similarly, trade was carried on with the South by wagon road and coastwise vessels.[14] Shoe merchants in Philadelphia had orders as far south as Charleston and New Orleans.[15] With the improvement in transportation, the wholesale-order stage took on larger proportions.

An instance of the transition from the retail-shop to the wholesale-order stage is that of the shoe industry. One merchant, at the trial of the Philadelphia journeymen cordwainers for conspiracy, in 1806, gave the following description of the reason and manner in which he branched out: "My little capital being laid out in stock, and no way of vending it at home, an idea struck me of going southward, and endeavour there to force a sale. I went to Charleston at the risque of my life, for the vessel in which I went had like to have been lost at sea. I put my articles at an extremely low price, by which I had but little profit, in order to induce people to deal with me. I got two customers at Charleston; from there I went to Norfolk, Petersburg, Richmond and Alexandria; and in all of those places I obtained customers. . . . I returned with two or three small orders." [16]

The chief characteristic of the wholesale-order stage, then, is that gradually the merchant-employer ceases to sell his product direct to the consumer. Instead he fills wholesale orders for the retail merchant. The price-bargain is now one step further removed from the producer.

The wholesale-order merchant-employer is distinguished from the retail merchant-employer in that he seeks an outside or "foreign" market. From distant retail merchants he takes

13 McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, II, 574, 575; Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II, 51.

14 McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, IV, 218, *et seq.*

15 *Doc. Hist.*, III, 100, 101.

16 *Ibid.*

"orders" for goods to be made and delivered later. He has now a larger amount of capital invested in raw material, products, and longer credits, and hires a larger number of journeymen.

Notice now the characteristic features of the retail and wholesale-order stages of the industry. The master workman in the retail stage had added a stock of finished goods to his business of custom work. This required a shop on a business street accessible to the general public with correspondingly high rents. It involves also a certain amount of capital tied up in short credits and accounts with customers. In his shop he has a stock of raw materials besides finished and partly finished goods. The merchant-function has thus become paramount, and has drawn with it the master-function. The two functions have equipped themselves with capital — merchant's capital in the form of finished goods, retail store, and short credits, and employer's capital in the form of raw material undergoing manufacture by workmen under instructions. The journeymen are left with only their hand tools and their home workshop. Thus the retail market has separated the labourer from the merchant. The outlook of labour now is solely for wages. The merchant's outlook is for quality and prices. But the separation is not antagonism. The employer-function is as yet at a minimum. Profit is still dependent on increasing prices more than on reducing wages. Indeed, the journeymen are able almost to double their wages, without a strike, and the merchants pass the increase along to the customers.

But it is different when the merchant reaches out for wholesale orders. Now he adds heavy expenses for solicitation and transportation. He adds a store room and a larger stock of goods. He holds the stock a longer time and gives long and perilous credits. At the same time he meets competitors from other centres of manufacture, which prevents him from passing along his increased expenses. Consequently the wage-bargain assumes importance, and the employer function comes to the front. Wages are reduced by the merchant as employer on work destined for the wholesale market. The conflict of capital and labour begins.

The merchant-employer's loss of his former control of the

price-bargain first appeared when he demanded that the journeymen do "order" work cheaper than "shop" or "bespoke" work. Realising that the wholesale merchant had to meet competition, they acquiesced. Thus the Philadelphia cordwainers agreed to "make order work at reduced prices, in order to encourage the exportation trade." [17] The Pittsburgh cordwainers practised the same policy.[18]

The conflict broke out when the journeymen refused to submit to further reductions on "order work," as it threatened their standard of life. The workmen in the shoe industry now organised to establish a minimum wage or to demand the same price for "custom" and "order" work.[19] Those employers who did custom-order work or retail-shop work conceded the demand of the workmen.[20] Some even abandoned wholesale order work and granted the demands of the journeymen. For instance, one of the masters announced that he would give the "new prices," since he had determined to "relinquish order work," but he would retain only "the best workmen, and that only for bespoke work." [21] Likewise, the journeymen who did only bespoke and shop work were not inclined to stand by the union for the increase in prices. They had nothing to gain by a strike. As one of them declared, "I should not be benefitted for I had the price already." [22]

Thus the organisation of the masters according to their employer-function rather than according to their merchant-function, caused a realignment of personnel. Both the employer and workman on high-class custom work "scabbed" on their respective class organisations struggling to control the wholesale-order work.

This attempt of employers to reduce wages so that they could meet competition was the ultimate cause of the struggle between capital and labour in the wholesale order stage; and the journeymen submitted as long as the reductions did not materially threaten their standard of life. However, the strategic move of the journeymen to make demands upon employers after they

17 *Ibid.*, III, 91, 96, 121, 124.
18 *Ibid.*, IV, 30.
19 *Ibid.*, 49; III, 14; see also above, I, 58.
20 *Ibid.*, III, 125.
21 *Ibid.*, 106.
22 *Ibid.*, 82.

had secured orders was the immediate cause for the bitter antagonism, which in the case of the cordwainers led to prosecutions for conspiracy.[23]

This forced the employers to choose between cancelling their orders or resisting the demands of their journeymen. The margin of profit was too small to permit an increase in wages on orders already taken. The employer, in taking orders on a competitive market, naturally figured on the prevailing rate of wages. So a Philadelphia shoemaker, who had orders as far south as New Orleans "to the amount of 2,000 dollars," complained that he could not give the "rise of wages" demanded by the journeymen "without a loss in executing those orders."[24] Another explained that he returned from the South with "two or three small orders," but, before he could fill them his journeymen "turned out" and he was forced to raise his prices, thereby losing four customers and the sale of $4,000 worth per year.[25] The leading wholesale-order employer of Pittsburgh made similar contention. He claimed that his profit on "Bootees with buttons" when sold in wholesale quantities was "from thirty-seven and a half to fifty cents. He paid two dollars and twenty-five cents per pair for making the "Bootees." At this time "he had a large number of orders on hand." Hence, when the journeymen demanded a raise of 50 cents a pair he was forced either to cancel the orders, to fill them without profit, or to fight the demands of his employés.[26]

Thus the modern struggle between capital and labour has its origin in the wholesale-order stage. Here the merchant-employer is no longer in absolute control of the price-bargain. This makes him powerless freely to adjust it to cost, which, in the custom-order and retail-shop stages, was his way of passing on to the consumer any increase in wages. In his business transactions the merchant-employer bases his price upon the prevailing rate of wages. If, after entering into contracts, labour demands a change in wages he is often powerless to grant it, and a struggle is inevitable.

23 See below, I, 138 *et seq.*
24 *Doc. Hist.*, III, 105.
25 *Ibid.*, 100, 101.
26 *Ibid.*, IV, 49, 50.

THE BUILDING TRADES

The foregoing distinctions between custom-order, retail-shop and wholesale-order stages of industry apply mainly to industries like shoemakng and tailoring, whose product can be transported to a distance. The three stages are not clearly distinguishable in the building trades, whose product is both bulky and localised. Here the custom-order and the wholesale-order stages are merged in a contract for a finished product. This is illustrated in the following contract of an itinerant carpenter for the construction of a house in the Shenandoah Valley in 1755:

"The sd. Johnson is to build a Framed House for the sd. Patton . . . the house to be thirty two feet long and eighteen feet wide from outside to outside to be eight feet from floor to floor to be covered and weatherboarded with clapboards two Tire of joists to be laid and the whole jobb to be finished in a workmanlike manner against ye first day of July next, for which the sd. Patton is to pay the sd. Johnson seven Pistoles and a half as soon as the work is finished and to find him Diet and Lodging Hawling and help to Raise the Frame and Nails for the whole Jobb To the true performance of the above agreement — Each party do hereby bind themselves to each other in the Penal Sum of fifteen Pistoles to be paid to the Party observing by the Party failing for witness whereof both parties have hereunto set their hands and seals this 26th Feby. 1755." [27]

The fact that the mechanic in the foregoing contract was required to work on the premises of his employer, could not in itself be regarded as evidence of itinerancy, since all labourers must do the same under any circumstances. Neither is the provision that his employer was "to find him Diet and Lodging" a criterion of itinerancy in this case, for these are also provided in railroad, lumber, ice, and harvest camps. What does indicate itinerancy is the clause requiring the employer to furnish "Hawling and help to raise the frame," as well as all necessary materials called for in the contract for the construction of the house. The carpenter furnished only his skilled labour. Besides, the house when completed was to be

[27] *Ibid.*, II, 275, 276; see also p. 276 for a similar contract for building a fence.

used by the employer, who was therefore also the consumer of the finished product. The difference between the itinerant, who marks the first separation of industry from agriculture, and the present-day railroad, lumber, ice, or harvest hand lies chiefly in this fact that one is engaged by the consumer who manufactures the product for his own use, and the other by a capitalist-employer, who manufactures to sell to others at a profit.

The basis of pay in the above contract is quite different from that of the itinerant, who is paid by the day, and the mere wage-worker, who is paid per task or piece. There is, of course, a resemblance between piece work and contract work. Fundamentally, however, they differ. The distinction is founded on the difference between the wage-bargain and the price-bargain. The wage-bargain involves a stipulated income. The wage-earner knows in advance that upon the completion of his work his income will amount to a certain definite sum. The price-bargain, on the other hand, involves a contingent income. The merchant does not know in advance to a certainty what his income will be upon his investment. His income is speculative in that it depends upon a margin between what it costs him to secure the commodity and the price he receives when he disposes of it to the consumer.

Piece work is characteristic of the wage-bargain, but instead of the day being the unit of payment, it is the piece. This introduces a little speculation, for, if the worker does his task in a shorter time, his income will be increased to that extent. However, the difference is quite negligible and the speculation, in addition to being on a small scale, starts anew with the commencing of each piece of work. In reality the income in piece work is a stipulated one, just as it is when the worker is paid a specific wage.

Contract work resembles the price-bargain, for the income is uncertain. The contractor does not agree upon a separate price for each small and individual unit of work. He takes the contract in gross, agreeing, as did the carpenter in the Shenandoah Valley, to do the entire job at a fixed sum. The amount he was to receive upon completion of the work was stipulated in advance. But his income was contingent upon the time in

which he terminated his work. If he fulfilled his contract within a month his income would be greater than if it took him six weeks or two months. The uncertainty in this case is as great as that of the merchant, and is analogous to the price-bargain. If the carpenter in question were to contract to do the same work by the day, he would be a wage-earner; but, since he contracted by the job he was a master, even though he did not employ a single journeyman, because his income was contingent. The Shenandoah carpenter, in contracting to pay a penalty upon failure to complete the work within a specified time, added an additional speculative tinge to his bargain, no matter how remote it may have been.

The first authenticated organisation in the building trades was that of the house carpenters of Philadelphia in 1724. In that year the Carpenters' Company of the City and County of Philadelphia was founded, with the object of establishing "a 'book of prices' for the valuation of carpenter's work," on the most equitable principles, "so that the workmen should have a fair recompense for their labour and the owner receive the worth of his money." [28] Although the evidence is not conclusive, it is probable that this company was composed solely of master carpenters.

Rules were adopted to equalise competitive conditions of quality and labour, so that one master would not have an advantage over the others. The company strove to equalise labour competition among its members by providing "that if any member . . . doth take a slave apprentice, he shall pay to the Treasurer for the use of the corporation, one hundred dollars or hire a slave as journeyman, shall pay the sum of eight dollars for every month he employs such slave, or in proportion for any less time for the use of aforesaid." This by-law was adopted between 1792 and 1807.[29]

[28] Richard K. Betts, *Carpenters' Hall and its Historic Memories*, rev. ed., 4. Copy of pamphlet is in the Wisconsin Historical Library. It is impossible from available data to determine conclusively whether this is the organisation against which the Philadelphia journeymen struck in 1791. However, it is certain that the master carpenters against whom the strike was declared were house carpenters, and that the Carpenters' Company was also composed of house carpenters. Moreover, neither Mease nor Betts had found a record of a rival master carpenters' organisation during the time of the strike, or for a long time since. It is quite likely that the strike was against the master carpenters belonging to the Carpenters' Company.

[29] *An Act to Condense all the Ordinances, By-Laws and Resolutions of the Carpenters Corporation, 1807*, sec. XII, in

The Stone Cutters' Company "was established in the year 1790," and "the sole object of its association was, from time to time, to regulate the measurement and prices of stone work, and other general concerns, an inattention to which had caused much gross imposition to be practised upon the public. . . . A system for the measurement of marble work is laid down, and a list of prices formed, subject to alterations, and additions as the prices of labour and materials may require." [30] This company also had among its by-laws "a provision expressly intended to defend the public from imposition by work of a bad quality." [31] The Master Bricklayers' Society was "instituted upon the plan of the Stone Cutters' Society, in 1809." [32]

The first known strike in the building trades occurred in Philadelphia in 1791, when the Journeymen Carpenters of the City and Liberties of Philadelphia struck against the master carpenters. Although the journeymen, as stated by them, were aggrieved that their "wages (which are, and have been for a long time too low) are meanly attempted to be reduced to a still lower ebb, by every means within the power of avarice to invent," the strike was precipitated by a demand for a shorter day's work, with additional pay for overtime. They complained that they had "heretofore been obliged to toil through the whole course of the longest summer's day, and that too, *in many instances,* without even the consolation of having our labour sweetened, by the reviving hope of an immediate reward." They "bound" themselves, therefore, "by the sacred ties of honour to abide by" the following resolution: "That, in future, a Day's Work, *amongst us,* shall be deemed to commence at six o'clock in the morning, and terminate, at six in the evening of each day." [33]

The "masters" on the other hand denied the allegations of the journeymen, holding that they "have, in no instance, discovered a disposition to oppress or tyranize." They held conditions of trade responsible for their inability to grant better

Philadelphia Miscellaneous Pamphlets, VI, in Wisconsin Historical Library.

30 Mease, *The Picture of Philadelphia,* 270, 271.

31 *Ibid.*, 271.

32 *Ibid.*, 271, 272.

33 "An Address of the Journeymen Carpenters of the City and Liberties of Philadelphia, in Dunlap's *American Daily Advertiser,*" May 11, 1791.

conditions to their journeymen. They explained their helplessness in these words:

"The wages of those Journeymen who have chosen to work by the day, and have continued with their employers throughout the year, have generally been five shillings a day, when master workmen have received the established price for the work which they have undertaken; and the wages of Journeymen have been higher or lower in proportion to the prices at which the masters have engaged their work. Those Journeymen who have chosen piecework, have generally received four-fifths of the price at which the work has been undertaken, which, considering the trouble of procuring materials, superintending the workmen, and giving directions, and likewise the expense of providing tools for the different kinds of work, and shops in which it may conveniently be performed, leave but a moderate and reasonable compensation for the masters." [34]

From the foregoing it is evident that in building, as in manufacturing, the price-bargain dominates the wage-bargain. As long as the merchant-employer controls the price-bargain he unhesitatingly grants reasonable increases in wages, passing it off on the consumer. However, when the market widens and the merchant-employer can no longer control competition so as to protect the wage-bargain, he must resist the demands of his journeymen. Not only is he obliged to oppose an increase in wages, but he is also forced to make reductions in order to meet competition.

Owing to the expensiveness of the unit product, namely, the finished building, it is customary even at the present time for the prospective owner to supply a considerable part of the building material. This seemed to hold true at the time of the carpenters' strike in 1791. The masters, in their retort to the journeymen, stated that those "who have chosen piece-work, have generally received four-fifths of the price at which the work has been undertaken." It is hardly possible that the other fifth could cover both the cost of material and compensation for the master's managerial efforts. On the other hand, the masters, in enumerating the items for which they expected remuneration, included only the managerial work of "procur-

[34] "For the American *Daily Advertiser*," in *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, May 16, 1791.

ing materials, superintending the workmen, and giving directions," and the operating expense of "providing tools for the different kinds of work and shops in which it may conveniently be performed."

From this it appears that the master carpenters were not capitalists earning a profit on their investment, but were small contractors whose profits depended on the cost of labour. The real "employers," according to the term which they themselves used, were the landowners who financed the building operations. Since the masters were small contractors bidding against each other and making their profit out of the labourers' wages, their position was that which in manufacturing industries came to be known as the "sweating system," characteristic of the succeeding merchant-capitalist system.[35]

ORGANISATION OF PRODUCTION AND MARKETING

The distinguishing feature of the custom-order, retail-shop, and wholesale-order stages of industry is that the financial and marketing direction of the business is still in the hands of the mechanic. He has come up through the trade as a journeyman and master, and even when, as a merchant, he solicits wholesale-orders, he does not lose his position as a mechanic. In his shop, at one and the same time, the journeyman may be engaged on "bespoke," "shop," and "order" work. His profits come from his management of the production, or "manufactory" side of the business more than from the mercantile side. But with the extension of the market he is entering upon competition with other centres of industry, which compel him to give attention both to better methods of production and to larger methods of financing and marketing. Hence it is that the wholesale-order stage of industry is marked by organisations designed to lower the costs of production, and to secure both capital and credit for the capture of distant markets, and protection against foreign competition. It is this stage of industry that the colonies were entering at the close of the War of Independence in 1783, and the stage that they could not fully realise until after the adoption of the Constitution of 1787.

35 See below, I, 102–104.

It was this stage that brought on the first distinct separation of wage-earners from masters in certain crafts, but which, for the most part, held out to the journeymen the familiar and often realisable prospect of advancement to the position of master. Not until the decade of the thirties did financial control of production pass into the hands of those who came into the industry from the outside as mere middlemen, or merchant-capitalists. The period, from the time of George Washington to that of Andrew Jackson, contains the efforts of mechanics to keep control of their business and to ward off the inevitable control by the outside capitalist. The earliest impetus to American manufactures came with the Non-Importation Acts of the Revolutionary War period. The most stringent prohibitive tariff could not have been more satisfactory to the manufacturing classes than the Non-Importation Acts. That they were aware of this is evidenced by their staunch insistence on nonintercourse, while the commercial elements wanted a less radical rebuke to the mother country.[36]

Naturally, manufactures suffered a sudden check at the end of the war on account of the enormous importations which followed peace.[37] The chief menace to their existence was foreign competition through the agency of the foreign importer. They had either to counteract this damaging competition, or be exterminated. Organisations of "mechanics and tradesmen" to resist the invaders were founded in the principal industrial centres of the nation. Thus in the city of New York "The General Society of the Mechanics and Tradesmen" was established August 4, 1785.[38] "In 1786 thirty trades were represented. . . . The various trades had their own societies, but sent delegates to the General Society, which looked after the interests of all. . . ." [39] Such societies also existed in Portsmouth, New Hampshire,[40] Providence, Rhode Island,[41] Albany,[42] Bal-

36 Becker, "The History of Political Parties in the Province of New York," University of Wisconsin, *Bulletin*, No. 286, p. 112; Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, I, 365–369; Betts, *Carpenters' Hall and Its Historic Memories*, 8.

37 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, I, 452; II, 13, 14.

38 Wilson, *Memorial History of the City of New York*, III, 16.

39 Smith, *The City of New York in 1789*, 107; for a list of the various trades represented see General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen of the City of New York, *Annals*, 11.

40 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II, 96.

41 Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, II, 850.

42 Munsell, *Annals of Albany*, III, 155.

timore,[43] Savannah,[44] Norfolk,[45] and other "principal centres of mechanical industry and trade" along the Atlantic coast. Some of these associations were also organised on state lines. There was an Association of Mechanics of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts[46]; and the Maine Charitable Mechanic Association.[47] Although these organisations were not linked together in a national society, they corresponded with each other and co-operated on matters which required united effort.

DEVELOPING AND PROTECTING HOME MARKETS

We have already seen that during the colonial period industry was subsidised financially and otherwise encouraged by grants and privileges. A second period of protection, now on a national scale, opened up with the organisations of mechanics and tradesmen following the War of Independence. Here originated the two slogans, "patronise home industry," and "protect infant industry," which eventually served to lift the master mechanic to the level of the capitalist.

Many expedients were devised to spread the propaganda in favour of domestic products. The newspapers co-operated with these associations in appealing to the public to use homemade commodities wherever possible.[48] Mathew Carey's *American Museum* took up this question, exhorting the American people to throw off the "chains of commerce" the same as they have cast off all "other chains of thraldom" by patronising domestic manufactures.[49] Public men were enlisted to set examples for their humbler fellow-citizens. Their part was to take a pledge to use domestic goods. Washington in 1787 pledged himself to wear nothing but American goods. He even obligated himself to pay a sum of money for the benefit of the mechanics in case he violated the pledge.[50]

[43] *Federal Intelligencer & Baltimore Gazette*, Dec. 3, 1795.

[44] *Doc. Hist.*, II, 368.

[45] *Acts of Virginia General Assembly*, 1811, p. 79.

[46] Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II, 244.

[47] Massachusetts, *Laws*, 1815, p. 17.

[48] See article in Philadelphia *Aurora*, Sept. 24, 1803. This paper contained similar appeals through this time; see also McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, I, 313, 314; Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, II, 731, 732.

[49] *American Museum*, 1789, III, 89. This magazine gives regular accounts of societies to encourage American manufactures and records their activities. It also advocated a protective tariff; see I, 432.

[50] *Ibid.*, 1787, III, 89.

The manufacturing interests were fully aware of the shortcomings of these educational efforts. They early turned to the government for relief and protection. The Confederacy being powerless, they petitioned the state governments, and they responded readily.[51] But while state tariffs interfered with the manufacturers in their wholesale markets, a national tariff would not hamper them and would still have the desired effect of restraining foreign competition.

Manufacturers, therefore, took up the agitation for a Federal constitution as the panacea that would remove the ills from which they were suffering.

A letter written by the New York Mechanics and Tradesmen's Society in 1787 to the Associated Mechanics of Boston reads:

"We are sensible that long habit has fixed in the mind of the people an unjust predilection for foreign productions, and has rendered them too regardless of the arguments and complaints with which the patriotic and discerning have addressed them from every quarter. These prejudices have become confirmed and radical, and we are convinced that a strong and united effort is necessary to expel them.. The Legislature of our State, convinced of the propriety of cherishing our manufactures in their early growth, has made some provisions for that purpose, and we have no doubt but more comprehensive and decisive measures will in time be taken. *But on the exertions of our brethren, and especially upon the patronage and protection of the General Government, we rest our most flattering hopes of success.* When our views like our interests are combined and concentrated, our petitions to the Federal Legislature will assume the tone and complexion of the public wishes, and will have a proportionate weight and influence."[52]

The Pennsylvania Society to Encourage Manufactures says in its report of 1788: "We have, nevertheless, the strongest reason to believe, that when, by the establishment of a general government, the clandestine importation of foreign articles shall be prevented, and that preference given throughout the United States to the manufactures of America, which the common interest demands, our established manufactures will resume their

51 See General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, *Annals*, 12 *et seq.*, for petition to state legislatures; for instance of state tariffs see above, I. 42.

52 General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, *Annals*, 13. Italics are not in original.

former vigour, and others be found to flourish which have hitherto been little known among us." [53]

The Boston "tradesmen" felt it incumbent to adopt lengthy resolutions resenting any imputation that they opposed the constitution.[54]

Mechanics and tradesmen were conspicuous in the processions commemorating the adoption of the Constitution. In Boston a Committee of Tradesmen had charge of the procession of "mechanics and artizans of every description in town." [55] Thirty trades were represented in the procession held in New York City.[56]

Immediately following the adoption of the Constitution "the absorbing topic" among the mechanics' societies "was protection to American industry, and the necessity of united effort in petitioning Congress to lay a tariff of duties upon such articles as were manufactured in the country." [57] Correspondence was carried on among the different societies in the country, and sentiment was being created for a tariff.[58] The efforts of the manufacturing classes were rewarded by a tariff in 1789, which was extended in 1790.

In all of these movements for patronising home industry, for the adoption of a Federal constitution, and for the enactment of a national tariff, the journeymen were united with the masters. In fact, as our analysis has shown, both masters and journeymen were practically on the common level of the custom-order and retail-shop stages of industry. The wholesale-order stage was just beginning. The employer was not yet a capitalist, and the notion of interest and profit on capital had as yet little or no place in industry. A "manufacturer" was literally a "hand worker," functioning indeed as merchant but not as capitalist. Thus, protection of the manufacturer was identical with protection of the wage-earner.[59]

53 *American Museum*, 1788, III, 179; see also Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, 45 *et seq.*; McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, I, 495; Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, I, 422.

54 *American Museum*, 1788, III, 76.

55 *Ibid.*, 163, gives a list of the different trades participating.

56 *Magazine of American History*, XXIX, 330, gives a list of trades represented in the procession.

57 General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, *Annals*, 17.

58 See *Ibid.*, 17, for extract from a petition and correspondence between the New York, Baltimore, and Providence Societies; see also Coman, *Industrial History of the United States*, 141 *et seq.*

59 In addition to the tariffs and the security of a strong government, a num-

IMPROVING METHODS OF PRODUCTION

These organisations also mark the first conscious attempt in this country to introduce collectively better methods of production. Prosperity and freedom from foreign competition had made the American manufacturers content with the old methods of production. Those who sought to install improvements were discouraged by the obstacles placed in their way by the British Government. Parliament prohibited the exportation of tools and machinery.[60] Even as late as 1804 cotton machinery was smuggled in from England "by marking it Hardware."[61] The first models for cotton-mill machinery were brought to this country by Samuel Slater (1789) "in his brain," as England prevented models or drawings of machinery being taken out of the country.[62] Since "power machinery and other inventions in England were effectively developed," the mechanics realised that "it was impossible for the old hand system, still used in America to compete in the production of manufactured commodities."[63] Not permitted, however, to avail themselves of the technical improvements of their foreign competitors, American manufacturers banded together to devise improvements of their own.

In order that domestic products might compete with imported products, the mechanics and tradesmen societies determined, together with other things, to encourage inventions and improvements. The Associated Housewrights of Boston sought to promote "inventions and improvements in their art."[64] The Association of Mechanics and Manufacturers of Providence was

ber of events occurred which stimulated home industry. Among these were the Napoleonic wars and the consequent blockades, the Jeffersonian embargo, and the War of 1812, "western land speculation and the canal and turnpike enthusiasm." McMaster, *A History of the People of the United States*, IV, 382; Taussig, *Tariff History of United States* (6th ed.), 16; Turner, *Rise of the New West*, 10; Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II, 13, 14, 178; Simons, *Social Forces in American History*, 160; Coman, *Industrial History of the United States*, 184. See also Callender, *Economic History of the United States*, 181, who presents the view not contradictory to that in text, that prosperity came in "before the new government came into existence . . . and before any of its measures had time to produce any effect." Channing, *History of the United States*, III, 426, holds the same view.

60 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II, 63; Howard, *Preliminaries of the Revolution*, 62.

61 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II. 109.

62 Basset, *The Federalist System*, 199; Coman, *Industrial History of the United States*, 152–154.

63 Basset, *The Federalist System*, 198, 199.

64 Massachusetts, *Private and Special Statutes*, 1822–1830, pp. 1, 2.

founded in 1789 "for the purpose of promoting industry and giving a just encouragement to ingenuity." [65] The Columbian Charitable Society of Shipwrights and Caulkers, of Boston and Charleston, was given the power, in its articles of incorporation, of "promoting inventions and improvements in their art, by granting premiums." [66] "On July 4, 1818, the Association of Mechanics of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts held their first public exhibition of premium articles. In making the awards, preference was given — other things being equal — first to apprentices and next to journeymen before master mechanics." [67] With a similar motive the Faustus Association of Boston, organised in 1805, made great exertions to secure improvements in the manufacture of paper, ink, and so on. It exposed frauds in poor paper, and employed chemists to analyse type.[68] Doubtless through the support of these organisations the first patent law was enacted by Congress in 1790.

INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION

Another general purpose of these organisations was the education of apprentices.

The mechanics and tradesmen of New York City took the lead in this endeavour. In 1821 their Society obtained the passage of an act amending its articles of incorporation so that they might "appropriate a part of their funds to the support of a School . . . and also to the establishment of an Apprentice's Library, for the use of the Apprentices of Mechanics in the City of New-York. . . ." [69] From the recommendations of a committee to whom this matter was assigned, it is clear that the school was designed for the education "of apprentices during three or four months in the winter." It is also evident that the library was not only intended for the use of apprentices, but for those members "who have not frequently, too frequently, experienced the want of information on many points connected even with their ordinary avocations." [70] The library was fa-

65 Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, II, 850.

66 Massachusetts, *Private and Special Statutes*, 1822–1830, 35.

67 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II, 244.

68 Pasko, *American Dictionary of Printing and Bookbinding*, 64.

69 General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, *Annals*, 251, 252, 256, 257.

70 *Ibid.*, 281.

vourably commented upon and discussed in many of the newspapers. Nearly 1,000 "mechanics' shops and manufactories" were visited, and in all but one the "boss" inserted the name of the apprentices. "Seven hundred and forty lads drew volumes on the opening of the library."[71] Similar libraries and schools were established in other large industrial centres.[72]

Societies whose membership consisted of those within a particular industry also had technical libraries. Thus the Carpenters' Company of Philadelphia, founded in 1724 as a purely price-fixing association, had advanced far enough in 1792 to ask for an act of incorporation to protect its funds, thereby enabling it more adequately to fulfil its "purposes of obtaining instruction in the sciences of architecture," as well as to carry out beneficial work.[73] By 1827 this society had forty-four sets of books in its library dealing with the technical phases of carpentry and architecture.[74]

Some of these societies were purely educational, not concerning themselves with trade or business matters. The Franklin Institute of Pennsylvania for the promotion of the Mechanic Arts was incorporated in 1823, for "the promotion and encouragement of manufactures, and the mechanic and useful arts, by the establishment of popular lectures on the sciences, connected with them, by the formation of a cabinet of models and minerals, and a library, by offering premiums on all objects deemed worthy of encouragement; by examining all new inventions submitted to them; and by such other measures as they may judge expedient."[75] In 1827 the Boston Mechanics Institution was incorporated "for the purpose of instruction in the sciences as connected with the mechanic arts."[76]

FINANCIAL AID TO YOUNG MECHANICS

Some of the purely educational societies, in addition to promoting the mechanical arts, also devoted their funds "to assist young mechanics with loans."[77] By granting loans to me-

71 *Ibid.*, 283.

72 *Ibid.*

73 *An Act to Incorporate the Carpenters' Company*, in *Philadelphia Miscellaneous Pamphlets*, VI, in Wisconsin Historical Library.

74 *Ibid.*, contains list of books.

75 Pennsylvania, *Acts of the General Assembly*, 1823–1824, p. 207.

76 Massachusetts, *Private and Special Statutes*, 1822–1830, p. 575.

77 See Bishop, *History of American*

chanics the policy of improving technical skill was correlated with that of increasing the number of independent producers. At present industrial education is intended to increase the efficiency and skill of workers, as well as their numbers. In so far as the workers receive any benefit at all it is in increased wages. The idea of assisting them to become independent producers is seldom linked with the thought of making them better producers. Undoubtedly the purely trade societies were not eager to increase the number of independent producers who were bound to become their competitors, and records fail to indicate that they aided young mechanics. However, the purely educational societies, composed in the main of people who were interested in the development and prosperity of the country at large, were equally interested in increasing the number of independent producers, and in promoting industrial education. Both were of equal public benefit to them. They observed that a large number of mechanics who aspired to become independent producers lacked the capital with which to equip a shop. Unless it were possible to borrow the money they could not hope to realise their ambition. Franklin, recalling the difficulties attending his career as a mechanic, bequeathed "one thousand pounds stirling . . . for the purpose of loaning 'to such young married artificers, under the age of twenty-five years, as have served an apprenticeship in the city, and faithfully fulfilled the duties required in their indentures'" so as to assist them "in setting up their business." He explained the motives for this legacy in part as follows: "Having myself been bred to a manual art, printing, in my native town, and afterwards assisted to set up my business in Philadelphia, by kind loans of money from two friends there, which was the foundation of my fortune, and of all the utility in life that may be ascribed to me: I wish to be useful even after my death, if possible, in forming and advancing other young men, that may be serviceable to their country." This fund, which was in all probability managed on lines similar to those of other mechanics' loan funds, was governed by the following rules:

Manufactures, II, 125, where he discusses the General Society of Mechanics of New Haven, also act incorporating The Maine Charitable Mechanics' Association, Massachusetts, *Laws*, 1815, p. 17.

"Two sureties are required to sign a bond, with the applicant, for the repayment of the money; the sums are to be proportioned by the discretion of the managers; but none are to exceed £60, nor to be less than £15 to each applicant. In order to serve as many as possible in their turn, as well as to make the repayment of the principal borrowed, more easy, each borrower is required to pay, with the yearly interest, one-tenth part of the principal, which sum of principal and interest, shall be again lent out to fresh borrowers. The interest is to be at the rate of five per cent., that is, one per cent. lower than the interest as established by law." From the death of the donor to 1810 the fund "increased to more than double the original sum."[78]

OTHER ACTIVITIES OF EARLY PROTECTIVE ORGANISATIONS

In addition to the functions discussed above, the early protective organisations also had other features, which closely resemble those of European guilds. They acted as trade courts, credit, mutual loan and benevolent associations, and so on. The by-laws of the Carpenters' Company of Philadelphia provided for the settlement of disputes between members.

"If any difference arises between members, relating to the trade, the person who thinks himself aggrieved may apply to the president or in his absence to the vice-president, who with the managing committee, shall endeavour to accommodate the affair; but if their efforts prove ineffectual, the parties are at liberty, each of them, to choose two members, the president or vice-president and committee to choose another member in addition to the four so chosen, and those persons, or any three of them, are to determine the matter, and report their proceedings to the president or vice-president for the information of the parties, who are required to acquiesce in the determination of said referees. But if either of

[78] Following is the statement of the fund in 1810:

Amount of interest at five per cent. on obligations, on 31st December, 1810	$9,063.00	
Balance in treasury	483.80	
Total		$9,546.80
Deduct amount of the legacy, originally one thousand pounds sterling		4,444.44
Increase of the legacy on 31st December, 1810		5,102.36

See Mease, *The Picture of Philadelphia*, 338, 339. The conditions under which loans could be obtained are stated by the committee in charge in *The General Advertiser*, June 14, 1791, and *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, June 14, 1791.

the parties shall refuse to abide by the decision of said referees, the president or vice-president as the case may be, shall lay the case before the company at their next meeting who shall take such order thereon, as may appear reasonable." [79]

Similarly the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen of New York City, among its enumerated activities, gave prominence to the one for "preventing litigation between" mechanics.[80]

The by-laws of the Carpenters' Company of Philadelphia also contained a clause providing for the collection of accounts owing to members. It was "enacted that no member of this Corporation, shall enter into, or undertake, work, begun by any other member, until the first undertaker is satisfied for the work done." [81] This company also had a "closed shop" provision: "If any member of this Company, shall measure, and value Carpenter work with any person not a member, on proof thereof at their meeting [he], shall be expelled from the Company." [82]

New York City as late as 1789 protected its merchants and mechanics from outside competition. "By the city charter the right to trade in the city, except upon fair days, was restricted to those who were freemen. . . . Merchants, traders, shopkeepers and handicraft tradesmen were taxed more if not native born. The tradesmen of the city apparently looked after the enforcement of these provisions." [83]

Both the Carpenters' Company and the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen of New York acted as mutual loan associations.[84] The latter society regulated "the loaning of money" under the following rules:

"That no money shall be loaned out by the Society, unless the borrower lives (and the real property to be mortgaged be situated) within the City and County of New York; and unless the real property offered to be mortgaged be twice the value of the

79 Sec. xi.

80 Wilson, *Memorial History of the City of New York*, III, 16.

81 *Philadelphia Miscellaneous Pamphlets*, VI, sec. x, in Wisconsin Historical Library.

82 *Philadelphia Miscellaneous Pamphlets*, VI, Addition to By-Laws, 1817, sec. iv, in Wisconsin Historical Library.

83 Smith, *The City of New York in 1789*, 100. For charter provision of 1648 see New York City, *Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York*, I, 302. For a similar regulation as early as 1679, see *Calendar of New York History, English, 1664–1776*, Mss., p. 84.

84 *Philadelphia Miscellaneous Pamphlets*, VI, Addition to By-Laws, Apr. 17, 1820, sec. iv.

sum to be loaned. . . . And . . . in case there should be more than one applicant at the same time, for any sum that may be in the hands of the Treasurer, it is hereby made the duty of the President to determine by lot which of the applicants shall have the preference; but the members of this Society shall have the preference of all other applicants for any money to be loaned." [85]

Banks were still unknown, and loans were not ordinary occurrences, but exceptional requests.[86] Under the circumstances the crude co-operative credit facilities were sufficient for the demands of the day.

The members of the early protective organisations rendered each other mutual aid in diverse form. Thus, among services to which a member of the Mutual Assistant Society of Hair Dressers, Surgeon Barbers, etc., incorporated in 1796, is entitled is that "his customers are also to be attended" in case of sickness.[87]

In order to protect the reputation and to maintain the good will of its patrons, the Carpenters' Company regulated the business and personal conduct of its members. A preamble declares that "whereas this corporation is becoming more numerous, and the reputation of such institutions in a great measure depends on the morality of the individual members thereof. Therefore . . . the Company shall appoint a committee of five members whose duty it shall be to admonish such members, if any such there be, who to their knowledge shall be in the practice of any immoral conduct, and if their efforts to reclaim them shall prove ineffectual, it shall be their duty to report such members to the Company, who shall take orders thereon as to them may appear just and proper." To strengthen the business credit of its members Section XVI provided that "if any member . . . shall abscond with a view of defrauding his creditors . . . he shall no longer be deemed a member." The Company also collectively guaranteed the timely and proper performance of contracts awarded to its members. Part of Section X reads as follows: "*Provided always,* that no member through negligence or delay, cause his employer to suffer

85 General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, *Annals*, 235.

86 Johnson, *History of Domestic and Foreign Commerce of the United States*, I, 303; McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, II, 24.

87 Mease, *The Picture of Philadelphia*, 272.

for want of that dispatch, which might be reasonably made; in such case, the president or vice-president, on application of the employer [owner], or any person in his behalf, shall immediately summon as many of the members as he shall judge necessary, who shall take the premises into consideration, and assign the employer such relief as they shall think proper. . . ." The Stone Cutters' Company also had a rule "expressly intended to defend the public from imposition by work of bad quality, or from injury by unreasonably delaying to execute it." [88] Regulating the quality, of course, also tended to equalise competitive conditions among the members.

Like the European guilds, the early protective organisations of this country also incorporated benefit features among their activities. Sick, accident, funeral, and death benefits were paid. The education and bringing up of the children of deceased members were looked after, and the widow was assisted "by advice, if required." This feature was developed during the depression which preceded the adoption of the Federal constitution. The mechanics were led to adopt this activity in order "to prevent the degrading reflection arising from the circumstances of being relieved, while sick, by private or public charity." On the other hand, affiliation with an organisation that paid benefits, entitled one to "demand . . . relief as a *right.*" The depression following the Revolutionary War was the first one of serious consequence after the establishment of a large urban population wholly independent of the land. While the farmer, during time of depression, may not be able to meet his obligations, or to dispose of his products, he, nevertheless, has food and a home to live in and in case of death he generally leaves sufficient property for the support of his family. With city people dependent "upon their daily labour for their support," it is different. Consequently, "all classes of workmen, and others who depend[ed] upon their daily labour for their support, and who in case of death would leave their families in distress," realised the need of this form of mutual aid to protect themselves and families in time of misfortune.[89]

88 *Ibid.*, 271.

89 Mease, *The Picture of Philadelphia*, 278, contains a sketch of the benevolent features; see also act of incorporation of

Societies acknowledged it by providing in their acts of incorporation that relief should be granted to "such of their brethren as by sickness or accident may stand in need of assistance, and for the relief of the widows and orphans of those who may die, leaving little or no property for their support." [90] Thus the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen regarded it as its function "to relieve the necessities of unfortunate members," and provided that "in the event of the death of any member, being in indigent circumstances, his widow, orphan, or orphans, shall be entitled to receive assistance." [91]

As long as these early protective organisations confined themselves to trade activities only, their financial transactions were small. However, when they also included among their activities benefit features and industrial education, larger funds were needed to further these projects. It was in order to protect these accumulated funds that the mechanics' societies sought legal incorporation. The Carpenters' Company of Philadelphia, although founded in 1724, did not apply for an act of incorporation until 1792, when it had accumulated a permanent fund, chiefly for the "purposes of obtaining instruction in the sciences of architecture, and assisting such of their members as should by accident be in need of support, or the widows and minor children of members." [92] Similarly the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen of New York applied for incorporation seven years after its organisation and as soon as it had a large fund, which was primarily intended "for the laudable purposes of protecting and supporting such of their brethren as by sickness or accident may stand in need of assistance, and for the relief of the widows and orphans of those who may die." Incorporation, the members felt, would "enable them more beneficiently to carry into effect their charitable intentions." [93] When in 1821 it decided to undertake industrial education, it petitioned the legislature for permission to "appropriate a part

the General Society of Mechanics of Poughkeepsie New York, *Private Laws*, 1808, 250; Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II, 164.

90 New York, *Laws*, 1804–1805, 405; act incorporating the Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen of the County of King.

91 General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, *Annals*, 248, 249.

92 *An act to incorporate the Carpenters' Company*, in *Philadelphia Miscellaneous Pamphlets*, VI, in Wisconsin Historical Library.

93 General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, *Annals*, 22.

of their funds to the support of a school . . and also to the establishment of an apprentice's library. . . ." [94]

Of course, there existed a large number of purely benevolent societies, many of which were composed of mechanics.

People whose protective organisation did not adopt benefit features, or who were not affiliated with such an organisation, joined a purely benevolent society. Anything that they had in common, like a calling, neighbourhood, or race, served as a nucleus for the formation of a mutual aid society.[95]

That some of the benevolent societies included both journeymen and masters is certain from the fact that such a society existed in Philadelphia among the cordwainers.[96] Yet, on the whole the journeymen established separate mutual aid societies. In this sense there was at this time a separation of industrial classes, but the division seems to have been more on social than economic lines. As far as it is possible to ascertain from available records, the dues and benefits of the journeymen benefit societies were smaller than those of the master societies. Thus the Typographical Society, composed of journeymen printers in Philadelphia, paid only a lump death benefit of $25. On the other hand, the Master Mechanics' Benevolent Society and Ship Masters' Society allowed even larger annual benefits to the widow of a deceased member during her natural life. The Ship Masters provided that "the smallest sum that can be given is forty dollars," the maximum being unlimited. The Master Mechanics' Benevolent Society had no minimum, but required "that not more than one hundred dollars are to be paid to any widow annually." Masters' societies also supervised and financed the education of children of deceased members. Another striking distinction is that, unlike the masters' associations with high initiation fees, the journeymen paid sick benefits. Obviously, the wealthier masters could tide over a period of sickness on their own account.[97]

McMaster certainly was in error in declaring, with reference to the journeymen's organisations, that those "of one

[94] *Ibid.*, 251, 252.

[95] The following names of societies illustrate the above point: United German Benefit Society, Scot's Thistle Society, St. Patrick's Benevolent Society, Northern Liberty Benevolent Society, Master Mechanics' Benevolent Society, Provident Society of House Carpenters. See Mease, *The Picture of Philadelphia*, 274–287.

[96] *Doc. Hist.*, III, 99.

[97] Mease, *The Picture of Philadelphia*, 268–270, 275, 276.

trade were almost invariably for the purpose of regulating wages." [98] On the contrary the acts of incorporation of the journeymen societies enumerated by him, as well as others, clearly indicate that they were purely beneficial, and were distinctly forbidden to use the organisation for the purpose of regulating wages. Acts incorporating journeymen societies included a clause to the effect that "the legal existence of the society ceases automatically if the funds of the society are misappropriated or if the organisation is convicted of an attempt to fix scales of wages." [99] As late as 1818 the New York Typographical Society was denied articles of incorporation which would have permitted it to continue "both as a protective and benevolent institution." Not only did the legislators demand that the "protective features in the measure" be omitted, but they would not adopt the act of incorporation until a clause was included providing that the society should not "at any time pass any law or regulation respecting the price or wages of labour or workmen, or any other articles, or relating to the business which the members thereof practise or follow for a livelihood." [1]

As a means of assurance and safeguard the activities of corporations were minutely defined in the act of incorporation. Masters' benevolent societies were also restricted as to the use of funds. An act incorporating the society of Mechanics and Tradesmen of the County of Kings provided, upon pain of dissolution, "that the funds of the said corporation shall never be diverted to any other purpose than such for which the institution has been expressly made and created." [2] In some cases forfeiture of funds and all other property belonging to the association was the penalty. Nothing outright is said as to the masters' societies making use of the funds for raising prices. Of course, indirectly they were prohibited from doing so. It would seem from these circumstances that the clause in the act of incorporation of the journeymen benefit

98 McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, III, 511.

99 New York, *Laws*, 1807–1809, p. 130: act incorporating New York Society of Journeymen Shipwrights.

1 Stevens, *New York Typographical Union No. 6*, pp. 78, 98.

2 New York, *Laws*, 1804–1805, p. 410. See also General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, *Annals*, 381, *et seq.*, giving in full its act of incorporation.

society definitely providing that "the legal existence of" a journeymen's "society ceases automatically . . . if the organisation is convicted of an attempt to fix scales of wages," was inserted for the benefit of the masters. The masters of European guilds controlled their journeymen by legally forbidding them "to dwell apart from their masters," and by controlling the funds and appointing the officers of their societies.[3] It is obvious that such practices could hardly be inaugurated in this country, since the old traditions did not apply. Not being able to control their journeymen directly, the masters were undoubtedly content to control them indirectly by specifically forbidding them not only to use the funds in an effort to raise wages, but even to use the organisation for that purpose. The antagonism between master and journeyman had not yet reached the breaking point, so the latter accepted these restrictions without much dissent.

It is true that, when economic antagonism between master and journeymen became inevitable, some of these journeymen mutual benefit societies used the organisation to regulate or "equalise the price of labour." This was the experience of the journeymen printers of Philadelphia, who were organised into a benefit society by the assistance "of the venerable Franklin," and dissolved in 1795, only to reorganise in 1802 as a trade union with benefit features.[4] However, the origin of the early journeymen societies was prompted by a desire to provide for unemployment, sickness, and death, rather than a desire to regulate wages and conditions of employment. Hence the division between masters and journeymen, although one of wealth, was based upon social rather than economic lines.

3 Webb, *History of Trade Unionism* (new ed.), 3-5.

4 Mease, *The Picture of Philadelphia*, 272.

CHAPTER III

THE MERCHANT CAPITALIST

The Mechanic's Need of Capital. Inadequate credit and market facilities, 88. Domestic manufacturer at disadvantage, 90. Overcoming financial and market difficulties, 91. Patriotic organisations to aid domestic manufacturer, 91. The Pennsylvania Society, 91. Philadelphia Domestic Society, 92. Raising capital in colonial times, 92. Warehouses as marketing agencies, 93. Private commission stores, 94. Pittsburgh Mechanics and Manufacturers' Co-operative Warehouse, 95. Poorer mechanics' co-operative retail stores, 96. Wage earners' co-operative warehouses and stores, 96. Warehouses successful in beginning, 98. Co-operation among European small producers, 99.

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THE advent of highway transportation, and with the introduction of steamboats, canal, river, and ocean transportation,[1] revolutionised market practices.

Retail merchants of the South and West began to journey to the commercial centres of the Atlantic Coast once or twice a year to purchase stock sufficient to last during the interval. In selling their goods they were compelled to accept payment in the staple products of their localities. Since they must dispose of these before they could meet their obligation to the manufacturer, they naturally demanded credit for that length of time. In the early period six months was the shortest credit

1 For a description of the various developments in transportation and their effect on commerce see Johnson, *History of Domestic and Foreign Commerce of the United States*, I, chap. xiii; McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, III, 459 *et seq.*; Nystrom, *The Economics of Retailing*, chap. ii. See also above I 6, 26 *et seq.*

asked and granted.[2] This situation made it necessary for the manufacturer not only to extend long-time credit but also to have sufficient capital to continue producing in the meantime and to stock up.

The credit facilities of the time were wholly inadequate to meet this new method of financing a business. A "worthy" mechanic who aspired to become an independent producer, could, upon presentation of proper security, obtain the initial capital needed to found a business. Small manufacturers[3] could also secure a loan from their association or business friends. But such loans were asked for only in cases of emergency. Besides, the security exacted was real estate. As late as 1821 the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen of the City of New York loaned money only on real property mortgages, and in 1833 it still loaned money on tangible property.[4] Similarly the few banks that existed at the time when these new markets were opening up required chiefly land as security on loans.[5] Intangible capital, whether in the form of customer's notes or bills receivable, was not accepted. The earliest loans on evidences of intangible capital were made by merchants. A merchant would agree with a manufacturer, who had contracts or notes, to honour orders which he issued to his workmen in lieu of cash wages. He would then redeem the orders in merchandise. Such accounts would run until the manufacturer's customers made their remittances.[6]

It will readily be seen that business was considerably hampered under a credit system which did not recognise intangible evidences of property. The small producer especially suffered under these conditions.

The older market facilities were quite as inadequate for the new conditions as the older credit arrangements. If the retail merchant on his semi-annual journey wished to buy "domestic manufactures" it was necessary for him, in the case of handicraft manufacture, to visit individual places of busi-

2 See for instance Johnson, *Sketches of Lynn*, 103.

3 It must be remembered that at this period the word "manufacturer," as already noted was used in its exact sense of handworker, and was equivalent to the term "mechanic," "tradesman," or, usually, "master workman."

4 General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, *Annals*, 235, 260, 269.

5 Dewey, *Financial History of the United States*, 5th ed., 24-27.

6 Johnson, *Sketches of Lynn*, 86–105.

ness, or, in case of home manufacture, to attend the public market. By buying from foreign importers he avoided the inconvenience of searching out individual sellers.

Just as the small manufacturer suffered most from insufficient credit facilities, so he was also the worst victim of inadequate marketing facilities. According to an advertisement for the formation of a warehouse for marketing domestic goods, in 1806 "the stocking makers" of Philadelphia and vicinity were "obliged to attend the Philadelphia market twice a week, thereby losing an entire third part of their time in endeavouring to sell the goods they manufacture in the other two-thirds; add to this the impossibility there is sometimes of making sales in the market, whereby the manufacturer is not unfrequently compelled to make sacrifices of his goods at a price far below their value, or what he can afford them at. . . ." The home manufacturer was as inconvenienced in securing his raw material as in marketing his finished product. This is also illustrated by the predicament of the home manufacturer of textiles. "As there is no market where the spinner can sell her yarn so neither is there any place to which the manufacturer can go to purchase it, and he is consequently obliged to go to the skinner and pay down ready money for the wool, he has then to give it out to be spun, dyed, twisted, &c., all which retards his operations, and obliges him to lie much longer out of his returns than in other circumstances would be necessary."[7] The few larger manufacturers, while less inconvenienced by lack of capital, suffered almost as much from insufficient marketing machinery.

As long as domestic manufacturers laboured under these disadvantages they could not hope to compete with foreign importers for the new markets of the South and West. The importers were long established in the business, had the necessary capital with which to finance it, and could buy their stock on credit. Whatever little capital was available in this country was also at their command, since they were engaged in a going business, and borrowers would prefer to entrust their money to them rather than to those entering into new and uncertain

[7] Announcement in Philadelphia *Aurora*, Jan. 5, 1806, entitled "American Manufactures."

enterprises.[8] This enabled them to extend credit to the retail merchants who traded with them. They also had centrally located "warehouses" and auction rooms where the retailer could expect the best service and which he was accustomed to frequent when in the city for merchandise.

Those patriotic persons who had attempted to provide initial capital for the needy mechanic, to encourage industry through premiums, bounties, and other privileges, to reduce the cost of manufacture and improve the quality through mechanical invention and industrial education, to educate the American public to give preference to "American Manufactures," soon learned that they had overlooked the most important link in this chain of American enterprise. Their attempts to supplant imported goods were of no consequence as long as the American manufacturer did not have adequate facilities for financing his business or marketing his finished product.

While the development of national markets was still in its infancy, attempts were already begun to overcome the financial and marketing difficulties of the manufacturer. Organisations were formed to supply capital as well as marketing agencies. These associations combined the three functions of promoter, banker, and merchant. Organisations of this kind began to make their appearance in the last decade of the eighteenth century. They concerned themselves with the marketing of products, some confining themselves exclusively to this activity. Others undertook the additional activity of establishing factories, bringing people with means together in manufacturing enterprises, loaning money to mechanics, supplying others with raw material, or advancing them money on manufactured products deposited in the warehouse of the society.

Since individual mechanics could not command capital, influential persons associated to raise it for them. Thus in 1789 "the Pennsylvania Society for the encouragement of manufactures and the useful arts," headed by Tench Cox, induced the legislature to subscribe "one thousand pounds for one hundred shares in the stock of the company," and to make "a loan of

8 See Channing, *History of the United States*, III, 423, with reference to "scarcity of caiptal."

two hundred pounds to John Hewson, calico-printer to the Society." With this capital the Society established its own calico factory. This Society was also instrumental in encouraging people to associate for the purpose of founding a factory, which should be conducted under the charter of the Society,[9] and managed by a committee chosen by the subscribers. New Jersey chartered a similar company in 1791 with extensive privileges for carrying on various kinds of manufacture.[10]

Societies supplied capital to handicraft and home manufacturers by similar methods. In 1806 the Philadelphia Domestic Society was incorporated, "the funds of the company to arise from a subscription or purchase of shares of 100 dollars each. . . ." [11] An advance of "one-half in cash on the amount of the price fixed on the goods" was granted to all manufacturers of woollen, cotton, and linen goods depositing their wares at the warehouse of the company. "The balance or other half of the amount . . . [was] paid to the owner" when the goods were sold. To supply the manufacturers with raw material "all kinds of woollen, cotton, and linen yarn" were also received; and "to encourage and stimulate the industry of persons of small means, and who spin any of the above yarns by hand, such yarns . . . [were] purchased by the company at their fair value and paid for immediately." This raw material could be obtained by mechanics in lieu of cash as an advance on goods deposited by them. The Society also loaned money to manufacturers on "legal notes." At the time of its establishment 500 weavers were out of employment. The Society secured employment for them by loaning money to the manufacturers. The Baltimore Athenian Society, founded in 1809, was patterned after the Philadelphia Domestic Society. This institution also "made advances to the more humble fabricators of goods." [12]

Larger loans were raised in one of three ways, namely, lot-

9 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, I, 404, 407, 409; II, 18.

10 *Ibid.*, I, 411.

11 Announcement in Philadelphia *Aurora*, Jan. 15, 1806, entitled "American Manufactures" and May 28, 1806, under similar title, upon which the following description is based. Some of its activities are dwelt upon in Mease, *The Picture of Philadelphia*, 264, 265; and Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II, 118.

12 *Ibid.*, 140; see article in *Niles' Weekly Register*, Feb. 22, 1812, entitled "Athenian Society of Baltimore."

teries, issue of notes, or subscription. The use of lotteries to raise capital for private and public improvements was quite common. The state of New Jersey in 1791 empowered a manufacturing company to raise $10,000 a year[13] by this method. Philadelphia resorted to a lottery to secure $10,000 "for erecting a City Hall."[14] Massachusetts conducted a semi-annual lottery to raise public funds.[15] Even religious and charitable institutions adopted this plan of raising money.[16] Another method was followed by corporations, especially bridge, turnpike, and canal companies, in issuing notes with which they met their obligations. Public enterprises were also financed in this manner.[17] A third method was to induce people to subscribe to the stock of the corporation.

It will readily be seen that single individuals without an established business reputation could not command sufficient confidence to attract investors under such circumstances. Hence it was necessary for prominent persons, interested in the promotion of American manufactures, to associate and obtain capital for the ordinary manufacturer.

Individual manufacturers were at an even greater disadvantage in marketing their products. In order to secure the custom of retail merchants it was necessary not only to advertise but also to have a "warehouse" or stock room in the business centre of the city, which the merchant could conveniently visit. The foreign importers were located in this section, and the American manufacturer could not hope to compete with them unless he, too, was within easy reach of the retailer. It could hardly be expected that the retailer would search throughout the city for manufacturers with whom to do business. Nor was one manufacturer usually in a position to supply him with a sufficient stock of goods. The expense of maintaining a warehouse was, however, too large to warrant an individual manufacturer to establish one for his own use. Only collective action or independent private enterprise could overcome this difficulty. Naturally the associations that were formed to aid

13 McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, II, 24.

14 *The General Advertiser*, Mar. 2, 1791, 15.

15 *Ibid.*

16 See Philadelphia *Aurora*, Jan. 7, 1805, for lottery advertisement by German Trinity Church.

17 Sumner, *A History of American Currency*, 33, 63.

the small manufacturer in financing his business also established warehouses, similar to those of the importing merchants already mentioned, to enable him to market his commodities. Thus "at the opening of the year [1789], the manufacturing committee of the Pennsylvania Society, . . . offered for sale their first printed cottons, with corduroys, federal ribs, jeans, flax, and tow linen, etc. . . ." [18] The Philadelphia Domestic Society opened its warehouse in order, as it stated, "to seek out and increase the different channels for the vending and consuming of the different fabrics amongst us." It announced that "American manufactures of different kinds will be received for sale on commission." [19] Likewise, the Athenian Society of Baltimore included as one of its purposes "the establisment of a warehouse for the deposit and sale of Domestic Manufactures. . . . Goods were received for sale on commission, from individuals and large manufactories." [20]

Commission stores were also operated on a purely profit basis. Thus in New York as early as 1789 "the great merchants of the city sold largely on commission and their advertisements show a large variety of goods for sale." [21] The following advertisement, taken from a Philadelphia newspaper, shows how closely they resembled the warehouses, as well as the manner in which goods were sold at this time to the retail merchants:

"A COMMISSION-STORE

Is opened and kept by the Subscriber, in Second Street near the New-Market, No. 242, where he will receive all sorts of DRY GOODS to sell for his Employers at a moderate Commission — Having large Connections and Acquaintance in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, where he has resided 8 years, give him a prospect of transacting Business to a large extent; and the knowledge of four different Languages, will give him the advantage to deal with such Strangers as visit this city. The money arising from the Sales of Goods, will be paid every 14 days. Punctuality and Dispatch, the Soul of Business, will be observed." [22]

18 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II, 18.

19 Philadelphia *Aurora*, May 28, 1806.

20 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II, 140; *Niles' Weekly Register*, Feb. 22, 1812.

21 Smith, *The City of New York in 1789*, p. 99.

22 *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, June 14, 1791.

Mechanics also organised marketing warehouses on their own initiative. The mechanics and manufacturers of Pittsburgh, which was in 1819 "essentially a manufacturing centre, supplying to a great extent, the Western country with the products of home industry," "organised the Pittsburgh and Vicinity Manufacturing Association" to market their wares collectively.

"A large warehouse was opened . . . for the reception and sale of the various articles of manufacture, together with such other merchandise as was consigned for sale. No commission was charged for the sale of articles manufactured by members of the association. The wide range of commodities handled is illustrated by the following list of articles offered for sale at the opening of the Association: Axes, adzes, and augers, balances patent, bellows, smith brushes, buttons, bridle bits, and bridles, blank books, biscuit and crackers, castings, copper stills, counterweights, castor frames and crewets, chairs and cabinet ware, cutlery, coffee mills, domestic cloth and cord, cassinet and shawls, drawing chairs, edged tools, furniture mounting, grind-stones, window glass, . . . gun barrels, hackles, hatchets and hose, hammers, hats, bars and rolled iron, nails, patent plows, and mould boards, planes, paper . . . , plated bridle bits, stirrup irons, bridle mounting, shot, men's and women's saddles, scale beams, steelyards, saw-mill irons, soap, shovel and tongs, tobacco, tin ware, copper and iron teakettles, tacks and springs, coach, gig and riding whips . . . rectified and common whiskey, waffle irons, wire work, with a variety of articles manufactured in Pittsburgh not enumerated above." [23]

The scarcity of money and inadequate banking facilites made it necessary for the Pittsburgh association to accept from country retail merchants "other articles, such as country produce and raw materials, iron, lead, wool, cotton, sugar, salt, whiskey, bacon, hogs, lard, butter, cheese, flax-seed oil, hogs bristles, linen, yarn, and rags, . . . in payment for manufactures." [24]

While the Pittsburgh manufacturers organised to reach the wholesale market, producers with little or no capital strove to maintain their economic independence by establishing co-operative retail stores. Not having sufficient means individually to operate stores in which they could dispose of their products, they associated to do it collectively. The struggle of these small producers attracted the attention of Josiah Warren,[25] dis-

23 Killikelly, *The History of Pittsburgh*, 162-164.

24 *Ibid.*

25 See below I, 511, 512, for a bio-

tinguished as the first American anarchist, and his anarchistic theories evidently conformed to the marketing situation of his time. He worked out a revolutionary philosophy to champion and stimulate co-operative marketing, and showed himself to be a man of action by personally applying his theories in Cincinnati.[26] Three stores were also founded by his followers in Philadelphia based entirely on the co-operative plan.[27] Originally the object of these stores was to enable small producers to barter their wares indirectly. Money transactions were forbidden. Each member received so many hours' credit upon depositing his products, for which he could purchase commodities deposited by his fellow-members. Consequently the Philadelphia society was named "the producer's exchange of labour for labour association."[28] Members were, however, assessed 25 cents a month each since cash was needed for the payment of rent and a few other necessary expenses.[29]

They soon found this primitive business method inadequate and the society was reorganised, the name being changed to "Producers' Exchange Association." Now the store was permitted to sell goods on commission as well as to effect exchanges.[30] Thus these small producers gradually began to cater co-operatively to the retail trade. A committee was appointed "to arrange for opening the front store for the sale of cash articles." This committee reported "that they are convinced that great numbers of that class of the community for whose special benefit the system of Exchange of Labour was originally designed, are, owing to their depressed condition in society, unable to avail themselves of its benefits to an extent sufficient to afford them the relief their circumstance so urgently demand." They expressed the belief that "many of the evils they suffer may be remedied by making our operations more general," and therefore recommended that the labour goods be separated immediately from the cash articles, that the front store be appropriated entirely to the sale of the latter, that

graphic sketch of Josiah Warren, as well as for his later activities.

26 *Doc. Hist.*, V, 123–129.

27 *Mechanics' Free Press*, May 17 and Sept. 20, 1828, and Mar. 14, 1829.

28 See *Doc. Hist.*, V, 129–133, for a copy of the constitution in full.

29 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Nov. 29, 1828.

30 The new constitution was published in the *Mechanics' Free Press*, Jan. 3, 1829.

members depositing goods for sale for money be at liberty to fix their own prices, and that non-members be entitled to purchase articles in the cash store upon payment of 25 cents per month. Other provisions, too, were recommended for the regulation of cash sales which, it was maintained, would enable "such of the members as do not possess front shops and are thus compelled either to work as journeymen or sell their labour to speculators," to dispose "of their articles at a larger price than they now receive, while the purchasers will receive the various commodities we have to dispose of at a much less price than they now pay." [31]

The wage-earners also looked to co-operative warehouses as a panacea. In some instances, however, co-operation was used for retaliatory purposes. They generally organised such warehouses through their unions, following labour disputes. The earliest attempt at productive co-operation by workingmen, of which we have knowledge, occurred in Philadelphia in 1791, when the Union Society of House Carpenters offered, by way of retaliation, to undertake carpenter work at 25 per cent less than the price charged by the masters.[32] Again, in 1806 the Philadelphia cordwainers opened a shoe warehouse as a result of their conviction in court on the charge of conspiracy.[33]

In the middle thirties, when the wage-earners became more numerous and better organised, a fairly concerted movement for co-operative warehouses developed among them. This was particularly true in Philadelphia, where the city central union supported the idea.[34] Unlike the small producers of the twenties, the workingmen's co-operative warehouses catered to both retail and wholesale markets.[35] It was undoubtedly their endeavour to finance and exploit a wholesale market that made it necessary for them to appeal to their fellow unionists for financial aid.[36] The financial status of the individual journeyman hardly permitted him to supply himself with the necessary raw material while waiting to realise upon his product in a wholesale market. Hence, besides marketing the products of their members, these warehouses acted as co-operative credit

31 *Ibid.*, Jan. 21, 1829.
32 See below, I, 127, 128.
33 See below I, 128, 129.
34 See below, 467–469.
35 *Public Ledger*, June 11, 1836.
36 See *Mechanics' Fress Press*, Apr. 25, 1829; *National Laborer*, Sept. 10, 1836.

banks by advancing raw material without which the journeymen could not continue as independent producers.[37]

There is a noteworthy distinction between the early productive co-operation of the workingmen and that of the later decades from the sixties to the eighties. In the twenties and the thirties each mechanic owned his hand tools individually. Therefore productive co-operation was confined to giving the mechanic credit in the form of raw material and marketing his finished product. When the factory system and expensive machinery superseded hand tools, productive co-operation took on the additional aspect — which has since often overshadowed the other two — of collective ownership of the means of production. In the early period collective ownership of credit and marketing facilites was sufficient; in the later period collective ownership of the means of production also became just as essential.[38]

These associations, established by wealthy patrons of industry, were a success from the start, transacting a goodly portion of the business of their community. The sales of the Baltimore Society were over $17,000 the first 11 months, $32,000 the following 13 months, and for the year 1811 they ran over $51,000.[39] Similar success attended the Pittsburgh association, which handled "$60,000 of Pittsburgh manufactures annually for many years after 1823."[40] The New England Society for the Promotion of Manufactures and the Mechanic Arts, organised in 1825, made a phenomenal success at the outset. It disposed of its goods through auctions which were held in the spring and fall, and in the first five sales transacted nearly $2,000,000 worth of business.[41]

Although the warehouse associations were not founded with a view to profit, they nevertheless yielded as good a return upon their investment as any other enterprise. While the

37 See *Public Ledger*, June 11, 1836.

38 See below, II, 430 *et seq.*, for an account of co-operative undertakings of the Knights of Labor.

39 *Niles' Weekly Register*, Feb. 22, 1812.

40 Killikelly, *The History of Pittsburgh*, 162.

41 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II, 305, 306. Indeed the profit-making auctioneers presented this fact as a defence when legislation was urged against them. They "insisted upon the advantages of the system to the community in general, and particularly to the manufacturers, to the smaller of whom, the auction was almost exclusively the medium of sale for his goods . . ." *Ibid.*, II, 267.

underlying motive was patriotic, in that individuals solely concerned with gain would not have undertaken such an uncertain venture as a warehouse, the associations followed strictly business principles in charging the legal rate of interest upon loans, and a commission for "effecting the sales" of goods deposited with them. Thus the dividends of the Philadelphia Domestic Society generally amounted to 6 per cent, and at times to 8 per cent,[42] while the Pittsburgh Manufacturers' Association declared a 10 per cent dividend annually.[43]

Most of the co-operative warehouses of the mechanics and trade unionists also met with success at the outset. Josiah Warren's "Cincinnati Labour for Labour Store," although located "remote from the bustle of business," carried on such a thriving trade that it was necessary to enlarge the "magazine . . . to about double its former dimensions."[44] In Philadelphia the success of the first store led to the establishment of two more within a little over a year.[45] Similarly the ware-room of the Pennsylvania Society of Journeymen Cabinet Makers became one of the largest, if not the largest furniture store in Philadelphia;[46] while the Philadelphia cordwainers' co-operative store found it necessary, five months after its organisation, to remove its place of business to larger quarters.[47]

Small producers in Europe, in earlier times, embarked more extensively on these co-operative enterprises. In order to maintain their independence as producers they found it necessary to co-operate in marketing their products, buying their raw material, and raising the required capital with which to finance their business. Their aim was also to resist the encroachments of the merchant-capitalist whose ascendency tended to reduce them to mere workers in his employment.[48] In this country the change was so rapid that the small producer hardly was conscious of it until he actually found himself subordinated to the merchant-capitalist. Indeed, the helplessness of the small producers was so paralysing that, as we have just seen,

42 Mease, *The Picture of Philadelphia*, 265.

43 Killikelly, *The History of Pittsburgh*, 162.

44 *Doc. Hist.*, V. 134.

45 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Sept. 20, 1828; and Mar. 14, 1829.

46 *National Laborer*, Nov. 26, 1836; *Public Ledger*, June 11, 1836.

47 *National Laborer*, Oct. 22, 1836.

48 Unwin, *Industrial Organization in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, chap. vi; Bücher, *Industrial Evolution*, 172, *et seq.*

it often required outsiders to assist them in adjusting themselves to the new business conditions.[49]

THE COMING OF THE MERCHANT-CAPITALIST

The warehouses and commission stores developed simultaneously with the wholesale-order system. They manifest an adaptation to new markets which, no longer local, could not be exploited in the old manner. They received their impetus during a period of depression when the productive powers of mechanical industry outgrew the purchasing power of the community. Faced with either a surplus product or idleness unless new markets were developed, they opened a way to the latter. The more alert retail manufacturers, having acquired a knowledge of markets through experience, became wholesale-order merchants if they had sufficient capital to finance their distant markets. Many of them, however, could at best raise merely enough capital to become wholesale manufacturers, relying on a warehouse or commission store to sell their products.

By far the largest proportion of producers had very little marketing ability and much less capital. They never even had sufficient capital to become retail-shop merchants.[50] They bought a little raw material which they worked up at home, disposing of it on market day. Their capital was so limited that they were forced to remain in idleness for want of raw material until they sold their finished product. The warehouses and commission stores were both their bankers and their selling agents. Without these agencies the home producer could hardly have continued in his position of independent producer as long as he did. To them also is due the credit of having fostered domestic manufactures in their critical period.

49 The few large producers, like those owning the textile mills, in most cases did not require outside assistance to obtain the necessary capital. They also had their own agencies for marketing their products. Almy & Brown, of Providence, R. I., established such an agency in Philadelphia as early as 1805, while Samuel Slater opened one in that city in 1812. Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II, 111. The following advertisement taken from the Boston *Directory* of 1823 shows how other large manufacturers marketed their products:

" American Goods.
" Wholesale Warehouse.

" The subscriber has relinquished the business of importing British Dry Goods, and established a warehouse for selling of American Goods by wholesale. He is appointed Agent for the Factories below, and will promptly attend to all orders for their fabrics."

50 See Unwin, *Industrial Organization in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, 52, *et seq.*, for a similar situation in Europe.

Yet even the warehouses and commission stores could not cope with the ever-widening markets to which the commercial centres were catering. This gave rise to a new type in the business world — the merchant-capitalist. He was, above all, a bargaining specialist. The source of his power was the ability to size up markets for raw materials, for producing the finished product, and for disposing of it. Only such a type could command the capital necessary to finance a business on a large scale. Capital follows the market, and he who could show ability to develop and organise markets was the one who secured the confidence of the banks and other possessors of capital.

Here occurs the separation of the merchant-function from the employer-function. The bargaining specialist, or the merchant-capitalist, need no longer be one who has a knowledge of the technical processes of the trade. These he turns over to a subordinate or to the master workman, who now becomes merely the labour contractor; while for himself the merchant-capitalist retains those functions calling for his special skill in sizing up a market, driving a bargain, and commanding credit.

The banking system expanded along with the activities of the merchant-capitalist, enabling him to convert the distant retailer's orders into bank credits and to stock up a surplus of goods in advance of actual orders. "The number of banking institutions in the United States had increased from three in 1791, with a capital of two millions of dollars, to 246, with an aggregate capital of $89,822,422, in 1816," while in 1833, "including the bank of the United States, the whole banking capital of the Union . . . amounted to $203,827,883, the issues to $97,550,907; specie in vaults, $27,394,667; deposits, $77,181,462, and discounts $325,599,843." [51]

New problems arose with the new markets. The retail merchant is the customer of the merchant-capitalist. He, too, is conversant with the market and can play merchants against each other along the entire Atlantic coast. He has also a strategic advantage in that he deals directly with the ultimate con-

51 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II, 381, 382; McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, II, 81.

sumer. The merchant-capitalist cannot dispose of his goods unless it be through the retail merchant. The only good will that he could rely upon at this time was the good will of the retail merchant. Such devices as trade-names, trade marks, and advertised commodities, which now enable the manufacturer and wholesale merchant to reach the consumer over the head of the retail merchant, were still unknown.

In order to meet competition, the merchant-capitalist was forced to cut prices on his goods and to take greater risk in extending credit. At the same time he had to meet his increased marketing expenses and interest on capital; taking care also that there remain sufficient profit for himself. The banks assisted him with capital at lower rates than the mechanic could obtain. By purchasing raw material in large quantities he secured reductions in price which the small manufacturer could not command.

But there was as yet no method of reducing the labour cost of production by the use of labour-saving machinery, since, outside the textile industry, the improvements of the period related mainly to tools manipulated by skilled mechanics rather than inventions of new machines with which to replace the skilled worker. The reduction of labour cost was accomplished in a different way. By setting up his own warehouse or "manufactory" he employed directly such skilled workers as pattern makers or cutters to prepare the raw material. Then, by furnishing the latter to the home workers or small manufacturers in their scattered work places, he arranged to pay them piece-rates for doing the less skilled work. By thus dividing up the operations the entire family could be set to work. Thus the Lynn shoemaker, who was accustomed to supply himself with leather, to employ a number of journeymen, and to market his finished product in Boston, disappeared when the merchant-capitalist began to flourish. Henceforth he worked at home with the aid of the family on raw material furnished by the merchant-capitalist. He received his remuneration now in the form of wages.[52] From an independent producer the Lynn shoemaker was reduced to a dependent wage-worker.[53]

[52] Johnson, *Sketches of Lynn*, 14, 15, 92–99, 113; Abbot, *Women in Industry*, 151, *et seq.*

[53] In this respect he followed in the path of the small producer in Europe. Indeed, the opening of new markets, in

Likewise, by his control of capital and markets the merchant-capitalist made the wholesale-order merchant-employer and other manufacturers dependent upon him. They retained their function of employers, but with little capital, for they generally rented their shops. The merchant-capitalist owned the raw material and the journeymen owned most of the tools. The masters now became small contractors employed by the merchant-capitalist and, in turn, employing one to a dozen journeymen. They still were partly workingmen, having come through the trade, and continued to work alongside their men. Their profits were not those of a capitalist, neither did they proceed from their ability as merchants, since the contract prices they received were dictated by the merchant-capitalist. Their profits came solely out of wages and work. They organised their workmen in teams, with the work subdivided in order to lessen dependence on skill and to increase speed of output. They played the less skilled against the more skilled, the speedy against the slow, and reduced wages while enhancing exertion. Their profits were "sweated" out of labour, their shop was the "sweatshop," they the "sweaters." [54]

Separation of the skilled from the unskilled work also made it possible to introduce such cheap workers as children, women, convicts, and so on. These new methods for the manufacture of cheap work were freely resorted to by the merchant-capitalist, and were bitterly opposed by the skilled mechanics and the labour movement after 1827.[55] Sweatshop, convict labour, and home work are the characteristic modes of production of the merchant-capitalist stage.

This stage appeared first in the shoe industry in the decade of the twenties and has prevailed in other handwork industries to the present time, giving way to the factory system in which the employer becomes himself the capitalist. In those industries which required large amounts of capital in the hands of the manufacturer, the merchant-capitalist became the

the Tudor period, which required "capital" and "business spirit" also made wage-earners out of many small farmers. Hobson, *The Evolution of Modern Capitalism*, 15, 16; Unwin, *Industrial Organization in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, 22, 103–107.

54 Commons, Industrial, Stages, Classes and Organisations, in *Doc. Hist.*, III, 42, 43; see also Unwin, *Industrial Organization in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, 127–219, 224.

55 See above, I, 7.

merchant-jobber, buying and marketing the finished product.

The main advantage of the merchant-capitalist or merchant-jobber in reducing the labour costs of production, arose from his strategic position in the newly widened markets. These gave him a range of options in the purchase of products and consequent power to compel employers and labourers to compete severely against each other. He could have his wares manufactured in distant localities, thus not only playing against each other producers of one community, but also the different manufacturing sections as well.[56] He had at his command all known methods of production in this country as well as the products of foreign countries. His coming was the impulse for both trade unions and protective tariffs.

GRIEVANCES OF EARLY TRADE UNIONS

The origin of trade unions can, in many cases, be definitely traced to the encroachments of the merchant-capitalist upon the standard of life of the mechanics. The early grievances of the trade unionists were based on the sweatshop practices injected by him.[57]

To offset his encroachments the workingmen demanded a minimum wage below which none was to work irrespective of the quality of the product. Those who did better work could demand higher wages. To further safeguard their standard of life they also demanded a strict observance of apprenticeship rules, which would automatically eliminate the competition of woman, child, unskilled, and convict labour.

Our researches lead us to conclude that it was not, as many believe, the lack of opportunity to become independent producers that actuated the mechanics to form trade unions. On the contrary it seems that their only motive for organising was to protect their standard of life as skilled mechanics. Those whose chance of setting up in business for themselves was best were the first to organise into unions. Thus the early unions were composed exclusively of skilled workers like printers, shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, and so on. Some of these even

56 See below, I. 338, 339. 57 See above, I. 7.

excluded the less proficient of their trade. In 1809 "all the best workmen" were members of the New York Cordwainers' Society;[58] while the Pittsburgh shoemakers in 1814 excluded from membership those who worked on "coarse shoes."[59]

On the other hand no traces of organisation can be found among the unskilled, especially the cotton-mill operatives who numbered 100,000 in 1815.[60] This is explained by the fact that the wages of the unskilled were going up while those of the skilled were kept down by the merchant-capitalist. In 1784 common labourers were paid less than $4 a week, while in 1810 they were receiving close to $7 or $8 per week. At the same time the wages of skilled workers remained stationary, or actually declined, although the cost of living was constantly mounting.[61] It was the desire to resist this pressure upon their standard of life that actuated the skilled workers to band themselves together.

This contrast in their conditions appears in the shoe industry. The shoemakers of Lynn, Massachusetts, manufactured, on the whole, the cheaper grades of shoes. This made it possible to subdivide the work so that the entire family could be employed. Hence while the income of the head of the family, under the merchant-capitalist system, was not as large as formerly, the total income of the family actually increased. Besides, "every well-to-do shoemaker had his garden, and a pig-sty somewhere on the premises," as well as other avenues for a free food supply.[62] His earnings, with what he provided for himself, kept his standard from falling below that to which he was accustomed. Consequently, notwithstanding Lynn was the largest shoe centre in the country, the workers never thought of an organisation or a strike until 1840. On the other hand the skilled shoemakers of Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, and Pittsburgh conducted strikes at intervals beginning with 1799. Lynn had begun to be their chief competitor. A permanent working class was found in each of these centres, but in the one where the pressure upon the standard of life was not felt no attempt was made to form an organisation.

58 *Doc. Hist.*, III, 370.
59 *Ibid.*, IV, 28.
60 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II, 213, 214.
61 McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, I, 96; III, 510–513.
62 Johnson, *Sketches of Lynn*, 157, 158.

CONCLUSIONS

Hence, we conclude that it is through different methods of manufacture, which the merchant-capitalist is forced to introduce because of keen competition, that he intensifies and even creates antagonism of "capital and labour." He does this by forcing the separation of functions and classes a step further than it had been forced in the wholesale-order stage.

First, he takes away from the retail merchant his wholesale-order business. He buys and sells in large quantities. He assembles the cheap products of prison labour, distant localities, and sweatshops; he informs himself as to markets and beats down charges for transportation. Thus he takes to himself the wholesale business and leaves to the merchant the retail trade.

Second, he deprives the retail merchant of his employer-function. The retail merchant can no longer afford to employ journeymen on "shop" work, because he can purchase more cheaply of the merchant-capitalist.

Thus the merchant-capitalist, with his wide-spread, wholesale speculative market, completes the separation and specialises the functions of the former homogeneous craftsman. The merchant-function which was the first to split off from the others, is now itself separated into three parts — custom merchant, retail merchant, wholesale merchant — corresponding to the three levels of market competition. The journeyman-function is now segregated on two levels of competition, the higher level of custom work and the lower level menaced by prison and sweatshop work. The employer-function, the last to split off, makes its first appearance as a separate factor on the lowest level of market competition. Evidently the wide extension of the market in the hands of the merchant-capitalist is a cataclysm in the condition of the journeyman. By a desperate effort of organisation he struggles to raise himself back to his original level. His merchant-employers, who have now become sweatshop bosses, at first sympathise with him,[63] and endeavour to pass over to their customers, the merchant-capitalists, his just demand for a higher wage. But they are soon crushed between the level of prices and the level of wages.

[63] *Pennsylvanian*, June 15, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 27–29.

From the position of a merchants' association striving to hold up prices, they shift to that of an employers' association endeavouring to keep down wages. They are no longer merchant-employers but sweatshop bosses dependent upon the merchant-capitalist, and must do his bidding. The journeymen now have no alternative but to organise into trade unions in order to resist the encroachments upon their standard of life. Since the skilled mechanics were the first to feel this pressure, it was quite natural that they should also be the founders of the early labour organisations.[64]

64 The foregoing sketch follows, with some modifications, the analysis by Professor Commons, to which the reader is referred for further theoretical principles. His article appeared in *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, XXIV, 39; was revised as the "Introduction to Volumes III and IV," of the Documentary History of American Industrial Society in Volume III, and reprinted as Chapter XIV, of his Labor and Adminstration.

CHAPTER IV

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BEGINNINGS

THE first continuous organisation of wage-earners for the purpose of maintaining or advancing wages was that of the shoe-

makers of Philadelphia, organised in 1792. This society, however, existed for less than a year, and did not even leave its name.[1] The shoemakers of Philadelphia again organised in 1794 under the name of the Federal Society of Journeymen Cordwainers, and maintained their existence as such until at least the date of their trial for conspiracy in 1806.[2] In 1799 the society conducted the first organised strike, which lasted nine or ten weeks.[3] Prior to 1799 the only recorded strikes of any workmen were "unorganised," and, indeed, such were the majority of the strikes that occurred prior to the decade of the thirties in the nineteenth century.

Following the shoemakers of Philadelphia the printers of New York, in 1794, organised the Typographical Society, which continued its existence for "two years and six months."[4] This organisation was followed by the Franklin Typographical Association in 1799, and the last mention of it is found in 1804.[5] In 1809 the New York Typographical Society was founded, remaining an active trade union until 1818.[6]

Between the years 1800 and 1805, the shoemakers and printers had continuous organisations in the seaboard cities of Philadelphia, New York, and Baltimore. It is also possible that the printers of Boston were organised in 1802. In 1809 the shoemakers of Pittsburgh founded a permanent society, as did the Boston printers. Later the Albany and Washington printers organised. In 1810 there was also a society of printers in New Orleans. The Baltimore cordwainers also had an association. However, most of these organisations left no records, indications of their existence being found in records of other societies.

It was only in these two industries prior to 1818,[7] that organisation was kept up between strikes, so that in them only is it possible to discover what may be called trade union policies. The printers of New York in 1776 and of Philadelphia

1 *Doc. Hist.*, III. 93.

2 *Ibid.*, 72–103.

3 This strike was partly a lockout. *Ibid.*, 114.

4 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, pp. 35, 36; Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 860–894.

5 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, pp. 37–40.

6 *Ibid.*, 41–104.

7 See Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organisations of Printers*; Barnett, *The Printers*, in American Economic Association, *Publications*, X; Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*; *Doc. Hist.*, III and IV.

in 1786 disappeared as organisations after winning their strikes for higher wages. The carpenters of Philadelphia who went out in May, 1791, on the first recorded ten-hour strike in this country, lost the strike but afterwards organised a co-operative society and advertised their work at some 25 per cent less than the prices established by the masters.[8] It seems that in the short days of the winter the men were paid by the piece but that in summer the masters instituted pay by the day. This incensed the men and they demanded a specific working day from "six o'clock in the morning to six in the evening." While the "Union Society of Carpenters," which they afterwards organised for the purpose of taking co-operative contracts, was a society of wage-earners, and while their retaliatory co-operative production has been resorted to occasionally by trade unions for over a century, yet co-operation is an indication, not of trade unionism, but of the failure of trade union policies. It is rather an attempt of wage-earners to become small masters — an attempt which has always either failed or has eventually taken the co-operators over to the side of the employers.

The Baltimore tailors were successful in advancing their wages through strikes in the years 1795, 1805, and 1807 [9] but their endeavours are perhaps better described as persistent rather than permanent in character, as a search through the Baltimore papers for those years reveals no trace of a tailors' organisation.

The more ephemeral uprisings of labour are illustrated by several sailors' strikes, as well as a ship-builders' strike of 1817 at Medford, Massachusetts. These outburst represented a combination of riotous attempts to force demands upon the employers. Thus the Baltimore *Federal Gazette* of April 11, 1800, describes a sailors' strike in New York on March 26, 1800, as follows:

"A large mob of sailors who had turned out for higher wages, and were parading the streets of Fell's Pt., on Monday, in riotous confusion, made an attempt after dark to board and rifel a vessel

8 "An Address of the Journeymen Carpenters (Advertisement)," *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, May 11 and 16, and June 9, 1791; Philadelphia *General Advertiser*, May 25, 1791; McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, V. 84.

9 *Ibid.*, III. 511–513.

belonging to Messrs. David Steward and Sons, on board of which it was said, men had entered at $18 per month. Their design being learnt, several citizens put themselves on board, to defend her in case of necessity, from the ravages of the mob, who seemed bent on mischief, and approached with drums and fife, and colours flying. As they attempted to get on board they were opposed, when a severe conflict ensued, and notwithstanding the vessel lay close along side the wharf, they were three times repulsed, with broken heads and bloody noses. Mr. David Stewart, Mr. J. Beeman, and several others who were on board, we learn, were very considerably wounded,— but fortunately no lives were lost."

In brief, the period to 1820, may aptly be characterised as the dormant period. A continuous and persistent effort of wage-earners is prevalent in but two industries. All other collective economic efforts on the part of labourers to improve their condition as wage-earners were spasmodic and but few in number.

The personnel of the early continuous societies was entirely that of handicraftsmen, or skilled mechanics. In England the textile factory operatives were already forming unions,[10] but in this country the first strike of textile workers did not occur until 1828. The only manufacture carried on extensively in factories in this country was cotton. Even in this industry the building up of factories was hampered by acts of parliament prohibiting the exportation of machinery,[11] and it was not until 1798 that Samuel Slater built the first factory and installed machinery which he had clandestinely copied in England.

Then again the wages paid the cotton operatives were on a par with what was being paid elsewhere, so that their change to factory employment did not affect their standard of life, as was the case in England.[12] The average wage paid to cotton operatives was as great as that paid to most skilled mechanics of this period,[13] which was about $9 a week.

LOCAL UNIONS

The only competition felt by organised workers was that of inferior mechanics who came in direct personal competition

10 Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, 50, 73.

11 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II, 63, 109; Basset, *The Federalist System*, 199.

12 Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, 41.

13 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II, 213, 214.

with them. The first suggestion that we find springing from a trade union and looking towards a policy of equalising the competition of commodities over an area greater than that of a single town, comes from the book printers of New York. The book-publishing business in the year 1815 was evidently passing out of the hands of the master printers into the hands of the merchant-capitalist — in this case, the book-seller. Hence, in that year, the New York society of printers "debated the question of uniform prices in the printing trade throughout the country," meaning, of course, the Atlantic coast primarily. Master printers in New York contended "that unless Journeymen in other places would raise their prices to an equilibrium . . . it would induce the booksellers to send their work out of the city, as the difference in the price for which work could be done elsewhere would more than pay for the transportation." [14]

However, nothing was done at this time, and not until the decade of the thirties, when the merchant-capitalist had become the dominant figure, did the printers or any other tradesmen attempt to unite local unions into a district or national federation. Even then commodity competition was not as serious a menace as personal competition, and it was not until after the building of railways that national organisations began to take over the functions and to determine the policies of local unions.[15]

Consequently, the jurisdiction of the early unions of shoemakers and printers was purely local in scope. Each was independent of the others in its trade; and the relations between "locals" extended only to feeble attempts to ward off personal competition. Occasionally they corresponded on trade matters, notifying each other of their purpose and the nature of their demands, or expressing fraternal greetings. In one instance the Philadelphia Typographical Society aided the Franklin Typographical Society of New York financially to the extent of $83.50 for the relief of "distressed" members "in consequence of the prevailing epidemic." [16]

But the chief purpose of correspondence was to notify fellow

14 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 64; New York Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Mss.), Nov. 4 and Dec. 2, 1815.

15 Even at the present time the national organisation of the building trades whose product is localised have comparatively little authority over the "locals."

16 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 40.

printers in neighbouring cities of attempts to improve conditions of labour, so that they should not be deluded by advertisements of the employers. Thus, in 1809 the New York printers notified other typographical societies of their new price list, for which they intended to "stand out." [17] Similarly the Philadelphia society in 1810 submitted a copy of its price list to the New York society. The latter organisation called a special meeting, at which they approved these demands and pledged themselves not to "take any situation vacated by any of our brethren in Philadelphia under the present circumstances." [18]

In 1809 the secretary of the New York printers was instructed to communicate with the different typographical societies in the United States and request them "in cases where persons may have acted dishonourably towards their societies, and might be about departing for this City, that they would transmit information thereof to us, the favour of which will be reciprocated." As far as any records show, the Philadelphia society was the only one to accept this proposition. That this was embarking upon a new venture is evidenced by the opposition displayed by the president of the Philadelphia society, who feared such action was beyond the sphere of the organisation. The New York society itself recognised the necessity of safeguarding the practice, for it took great pains to clear one of its members, whose name had inadvertently been circulated in a scab list.[19] In 1816 the Albany Typographical Society sent out a list of "scabs" to other societies.[20] That year the New York printers also asked the other societies to join them in issuing

17 *Ibid.*, 52, 53; New York Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Mss.), Oct. 21, 1809.

18 Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 876; New York Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Mss.), Sept. 24, 1810.

19 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, pp. 50, 51; New York Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Mss.), Aug. 19, 1809; see favorable action of the Philadelphia Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Mss.), Oct. 28, 1809.

20 Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 889. Among the early printers a workman who refused to abide by union rules was termed a "rat." "The first use of the term in the United States in the society records is in the minutes of the New York society in a letter from the Albany society, dated November 20, 1816." Barnett, *The Printers*, 455. See also Stevens, *New York Typographical Union No. 6*, 50. The word "scab," now the common though unofficial term of disapprobation of organised labor and its sympathisers, was in use as early as 1805. An overzealous union man, wrought up by the testimony of a non-union shoemaker at the Philadelphia cordwainers conspiracy trial, took occasion, without invitation from the court, to publicly define the term. He defined it in the following picturesque language: "A scab is a shelter for lice." *Doc. Hist.*, III, 83.

travelling cards, but received no encouragement. In 1818 and 1819, when the question was again broached, the union, being no longer as aggressive as formerly, defeated the proposition.[21]

While we know that the shoemakers' locals were aware of each other's existence, evidence is not available to indicate that they corresponded. All we know is that in June, 1814, the Pittsburgh cordwainers resolved "to write to the societies in Baltimore and Philadelphia, and to agree with them not to receive any members of their societies unless they produced certificates of belonging to their societies, and then if he came to the place without one, they would not work with him."[22] Available data do not show whether the proposition was actually tendered and what action the others took upon it.

The immediate grievance of the early unions was against the competition of inferior workers. By introducing low-grade labour the employer was able to reduce the wages of the more skilled journeymen. The principal occasion of the competition of inferior workmen was the lack of apprenticeship regulations. The New York Typographical Society in 1809 complained that a "superabundance of learners, runaway apprentices and half-way journeymen," as well as "adults who had served less than half time at their trade, had a depressing effect upon the wages of full-fledged workers."[23] Likewise the New York Journeymen Cordwainers felt aggrieved because "the masters were in the habit of crowding their shops with more apprentices than they could instruct."[24] The printers complained of "taking full grown men (foreigners) as apprentices for some twelve or fifteen months, when they are to be turned into the situations of men who are masters of their business, which men are to be turned out of their places by miserable botches because they will work for what they can get."[25]

Yet the printers found it inexpedient to demand that their employers give employment only to those who had "duly and regularly served the term of three years as an apprentice."[26]

21 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, pp. 72, 73; New York Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Mss.), April 6, 1816, and Jan. 3, 1818.

22 *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 31.

23 *Stevens, History of Typographical Union No. 6*, pp. 65-70; see also Barnett, *The Printers*, 594.

24 *Doc. Hist.*, III, 300.

25 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 68; New York Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Mss.), July 13, 1811.

26 A resolution setting this rule into force was defeated in 1810 by the New York Typographical Society, notwithstand-

Had they succeeded in forcing such regulations on the master printers, they, of course, would have met with one stroke the problem of "run-away" apprentices and "half-way" adult workers. It was apparently futile to attempt to remedy the evil by restricting the number of apprentices. The field was not overcrowded merely because the employers had too many apprentices at one time, but because, as was said, the apprentices "elope from their masters as soon as they acquire sufficient knowledge of the art to be enabled to earn their bread." [27] Naturally in such a case the master printer would hire new apprentices, and the union could hardly object. This very likely explains the fact that the printers concerned themselves little with apprenticeship as such, and were at all times perturbed about inferior journeymen. The shoemakers, on the other hand, interested themselves primarily in apprenticeship. Furthermore, apprenticeship was presumed to be regulated by indenture and, as the "important difficulty was with runaway apprentices," the journeymen very likely figured that by discouraging them the problem would be solved.[28]

At any rate the manner in which the printers proceeded in solving this perplexing problem would indicate that they were fully aware of their weakness. In doing this they pursued two courses, both of them betraying their helplessness.

One course of action was that of a sentimental appeal to the masters, and of publicity in order to inform parents and guardians of the bad state of the business. Thus the New York society addressed themselves to the "justice and humanity" of the master printers, in whose power alone it lay to remedy the evils resulting from the employment of "runaways" and "halfway" journeymen.[29] And in trying to limit the number of new apprentices the Baltimore Typographical Society, as early as 1803, drafted an "Address to Parents and Guardians to prevent their placing so many boys as apprentices in the printing business," by disclosing the pathetic condition of the workers in the industry.[30]

ing it was recommended by the Board of Directors; Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 65; New York Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Mss.), Dec. 23, 1809, and Jan. 6, 1810.

27 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 68.

28 Barnett, *The Printers*, 593.

29 See address "To the Master Printers of the City of New York," in Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 67 *et seq.*

30 Barnett, *The Printers*, 593, note.

The other course of action found expedient by the early printers' societies was to refuse to "teach or assist in teaching any person in the art of printing who may have arrived at the age of 18 years," so the Philadelphia Typographical Society decided in 1808. Such action was found necessary in spite of the fact that this society had declared in 1803 that its members would not work at press work "with any person who is not a regularly bred, bound apprentice till 21 years of age." [31] The New York Society took similar action in 1811 by providing "that no member . . . shall be permitted to take with him as a companion at press a person who is of full age with a view of teaching him the business." [32]

Failing in these attempts the New York society from 1809 to 1815 debated the question of regulating apprenticeship before they took any definite action.[33] Finally in 1815 in order "to insure the proper instruction of apprentices in the art," it was required "that pressmen be paid a prescribed amount for teaching the trade to a beginner during the first six months of his apprenticeship." [34] The pressmen suffered most from the use of "half-way" journeymen, as one of the two men required to manipulate the press could be a labourer. But as soon as one of these labourers got the knack of the press he could hire himself out as a full fledged pressman. The market being overstocked with such men, any effort to enforce a six or a three years' apprenticeship would be defeated by the master printers. So the printers seemed to have hit upon the idea that if pressmen were paid for teaching the apprentices it would at least be possible to turn out better men. Thus the printers compromised and virtually consented to reducing the apprenticeship to six months.

Practically no complaints are found on the part of the

31 Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 866–889; Philadelphia Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Mss.), Dec. 10, 1808.

32 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 45; Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 876; New York Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Mss.), Aug. 17, 1811, Art. x.

33 See Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, pp. 65–70, as illustrating how the matter was dragged along from year to year without definite action being taken. See also New York Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Mss.), Dec. 23, 1809, Jan. 6, Aug. 4, Sept. 29, Oct. 26, Nov. 3, and Dec. 22, 1810, Jan. 26, June 15, and July 13, 1811, July 10, July 24, and Aug. 7, 1813, June 3, and Oct. 7, 1815.

34 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 62; New York Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Mss.), Oct. 7, 1815.

journeymen shoemakers as far as competition of "half-way" journeymen is concerned. The journeymen shoemakers were able to concentrate upon the restriction of apprentices, both in number and in kinds of work. Thus the New York cordwainers complained that "the masters were in the habit of crowding their shops with more apprentices than they could instruct," and maintained that "two was as many as one man could do justice by." [35] As a means of restricting the apprentices to certain kinds of work, the Pittsburgh cordwainers denied the employer the right to "put apprentices at the work of sewing on the leg to the foot," which they regarded as journeyman's work.[36] The New York journeymen even felt sufficiently strong to require that apprentices be members of their society,[37] and at one time the journeymen cordwainers of Pittsburgh refused to instruct "masters' apprentices," insisting that they themselves hire and control the apprentices.[38] That the employers resorted to court action in checking their journeymen shows how successful the shoemakers were in enforcing their demands.[39]

In order to eliminate the competition of inferior workmen the wage-earners also demanded a minimum wage or a piece rate. This was the first action taken by a union after organisation.[40] The New York journeymen printers found that it was the inferior workers who worked secretly below the price list.[41] The Pittsburgh cordwainers were compelled to change their rule of not permitting "coarse workers" into the society, setting up instead a minimum price which "made no distinction between good and bad workmen." [42] Similarly the Philadelphia cordwainers worked on the principle that "none are to work under the price," but that "a good workman may get more." [43]

The demand for a minimum wage took the form either of a flat minimum wage by the week or a minimum to be paid by the task or piece. The printers demanded both, while the shoemakers demanded the latter only. The printers found it nec-

35 *Doc. Hist.*, III, 255, 300.
36 *Ibid.*, IV, 31, 43, 44.
37 *Ibid.*, III, 369.
38 *Ibid.*, IV, 37.
39 See below, I. 138 *et seq.*
40 Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 860; *Doc. Hist.* III. 93.
41 Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 873, 874.
42 *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 23, 28, 33, 49.
43 *Ibid.*, III, 120.

essary to demand a flat minimum in addition to a fixed piece rate because the journeyman printer was required to be in his master's shop during the day, whether fully employed or not. The shoemakers, however, took their work home, and when there was not sufficient work they were at liberty to employ their time as they saw fit. It is for this reason that the printers, although not making the question of hours an issue, included the maximum number of hours that could be expected of a journeyman in order that he might claim his minimum wage.[44]

EMPLOYER MEMBERSHIP

The proposition of barring employers from membership in the journeymen societies arose only in one instance. It was not a question of permitting employers to join the society, but rather whether journeymen who became employers should be allowed to continue their membership. During this period it was still quite common for journeymen to become employers. Indeed the Philadelphia master carpenters did not exaggerate when they declared in 1791 that "most of those who are now masters, have in their turn, been journeymen themselves."[45] As late as 1825 the Boston master carpenters tried to convince their journeymen that their demands were "fraught with numerous and pernicious evils, not only as respects their employers, but the public at large, and especially themselves; for all Journeymen of good character and of skill, may expect very soon to become masters, and like us the employers of others; and by the measure which they are now inclined to adopt, they will intail upon themselves the inconvenience to which they seem desirous that we should now be exposed!"[46]

In the case of the cordwainers those who became employers dropped out of the society, apparently because they did not expect to return to their former position.[47] Among the printers it seems to have been different. "A journeyman one month was an employer the next, and frequently two or three journeymen would pool their cash and publish a book, divide the profits

44 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 55.

45 *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, May 16, 1791.

46 *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 76.

47 See for instance the Philadelphia Trial in *Ibid.*, III, 98, 170; Pittsburgh Trial in *Ibid.*, IV, 27, 42, 47, 54, 65.

on its publication, and then dissolve partnership."[48] This condition probably led to a tacit acquiescence in allowing employers to retain membership in the society. With the exception of the New York printers, none seemed to have had occasion to alter the practice. In this exceptional case the printers realised the inconsistency when an employer member associated himself with his fellow employers in an attack upon their organisation. This occurred in 1817, some eighteen years after their first society was founded.

The expulsion of the employer member in 1817 naturally prompted an unequivocal enunciation of principles: "Experience teaches us that the actions of men are influenced almost wholly by their interests, and that it is almost impossible that a Society can be well regulated and useful when its members are actuated by opposite motives, and separate interests. This society is a society of *journeymen* printers; and as the interests of the journeymen are *separate* and in some respects *opposite* to those of the employers, we deem it improper that they should have any voice or influence in our deliberations. . . ."[49] This declaration of principles was not, of course, inconsistent with their former statement in 1809 that "between employers and employed there are mutual interests. . . ."[50] They certainly did not believe that the difference in interests was insurmountable. They merely meant that their interests were in many respects different, hence their organisations should be aligned on that basis.

However, neither the printers nor cordwainers had an elaborate philosophy at this time. When circumstances demanded, as in the instance of the New York printers, they contented themselves with a brief statement justifying their action. The printers were also in the habit of appealing to their employers for consideration. But the New York cordwainers in the preamble to their constitution of 1805 explained in a few words the need for a separate journeymen's society: "Impressed

48 Cressingham, in Typographical Union No. 6, *Official Annual*, March, 1892, quoted from Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 39.

49 *Ibid.*, 76; New York Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Mss.), Nov. 1, 1817. Italics are in original.

50 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 52; New York Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Mss.), Sept. 30, 1809; see also Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 865, 882.

with a sense of our just rights, and to guard against the intrigue or artifices that may at any time be used by our employers to reduce our wages lower than what we deem an adequate reward for our labour, [we] have unanimously agreed to the following articles as the Constitution of our Society." [51] Likewise, the attorney for the Pittsburgh cordwainers defended their association because " it enabled them to meet the employers on a footing of equality." [52]

Substantially, the declaration of the printers agrees with that of the cordwainers. The former, probably owing to their weakness, were more conciliatory, reassuring the employers at every opportunity that their interests were mutual and harmonious, and striving to merit their consideration. The Philadelphia Typographical Society in 1802 appended a very diplomatic note to its price list, which read in part as follows: " Our object is, to have one uniform price established. In doing this, we shall act as men toward men . . . no person will leave his employ until he has given a reasonable notice . . . in return, we expect that your conduct towards us will be equally candid. Indeed, we cherish a hope, that the time is not far distant, when the *employer* and *employed* will vie with each other, the one, in allowing a competent salary, the other, in deserving it." [53] Similarly in 1816 the Philadelphia Journeymen Pressmen attached a flattering, if not apologetic letter to their price list.

" The pressmen are induced, from a duty which they owe to themselves to call your serious attention to what they here present. . . . They therefore anticipate that you will, with liberality becoming your profession, give your decided approbation to the annexed scale of prices. Your opposition we ought not to expect. . . . On our part we assure you that we will use our utmost endeavors in this conference to produce a good understanding and to avoid as far as possible those inconveniences and altercations which invariably arise out of an imperfect understanding, well aware that it is too often cherished by those whose position ' does not command a view of the whole ground.' " [54]

51 *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 364, 365.
52 *Ibid.*, IV, 68.
53 Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 865. Italics are in original.
54 *Ibid.*, 882, 883.

METHODS OF BARGAINING

The early trade unions started out with individual bargaining. The present practice of asking for a conference with representatives of employers in order to agree upon terms collectively was not thought of until later. Not even conferences were held between the individual employers and the representatives of the men. They merely determined a scale of prices and pledged one another, as in the case of the shoemakers, "not to work for any employer who did not give the wages, nor beside any journeyman who did not get the wages." [55] The journeymen very likely copied this method from their masters, who as merchants were accustomed to determine prices and pledge each other to abide by them.[56]

Considering that most of the masters employed only a few journeymen, generally working by their side, the latter were hardly at a disadvantage in personally striking their own bargains. Documentary sources do not indicate the causes that actuated the workers to substitute collective for individual action, but it is quite certain that it was not due, as is generally imagined, to the enormous economic power exercised by the employer, or because of his superior bargaining ability.

The first step towards collective action was taken when the journeymen selected a committee to visit individual employers with the price list. The Philadelphia Typographical Society followed this practice as early as 1802.[57] The shoemakers, both in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, followed a similar practice.[58]

What approaches the modern notion of collective bargaining developed as incidental to the practice of submitting a price list to individual employers. Neither method, however, supplanted the other during this period. Indeed the prevalent mode was still that of negotiating with individual employers.

The first attempt at collective bargaining, that is, a meeting

55 *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 25, 26, 30, 43; see also III, 93; for printers see Philadelphia *Aurora*, Jan. 2, 1806, article entitled "An Account of the New York Typographical Society," particularly toast frowning upon "journeymen printers who work for less than their established prices." Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, pp. 45, 47; *A Historical Sketch of the Philadelphia Typographical Society, 1802–1832*; Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 860.

56 See above, I, 68.

57 Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 865.

58 *Doc. Hist.*, III, 97, 125; IV, 30.

of representatives of employers and employés to consider and negotiate conditions of employment, was made by the Philadelphia Journeymen Cordwainers. They were locked out in 1799 for refusing to consent to a decrease in wages. It was during winter—"the dullest season." In a short time the journeymen sued for peace. "A deputation from the society waited upon the employers with an offer of compromise, and they said they would consider it, and appointed a time for a committee of theirs to meet" [59] with the journeymen. They carried on negotiations, the masters apparently in the end agreeing to the compromise.[60]

A clear case of collective bargaining in the printing industry does not appear until a much later date. In 1809 the New York journeymen printers drew up a price list, which they submitted to the individual employers.[61] "Upon receipt of the notification from the journeymen's society the master printers convened . . . to consider the claims of the workmen. The meeting adopted a counter proposal, and appointed a committee . . . to submit it to the union." [62] This proposition was contained in a set of resolutions accompanied by an explanation:

"In presenting them to the consideration of the Typographical Society they think it proper to remark that, although no circumstances have come to their knowledge which would justify on the part of the journeymen a demand for more than the customary wages, yet, desirous of meeting them in the spirit of conciliation and harmony, and to remove every obstacle that might have a tendency to interrupt a mutual good understanding the master printers have made considerable advances on the prices hitherto given, and to as great an extent as the present state of the printing business would admit. The scale which is now offered may, therefore, be considered as a *maximum,* beyond which it would be highly injurious, if not ruinous to the interests of the trade to venture." [63]

Although the journeyman who moved "that a committee of three . . . be appointed to confer with the committee of master printers," "disliked the stile of the note, which savoured much of despotism, yet he thought it consistent that we should

59 *Ibid.*, III, 114.
60 *Ibid.*, 113–116.
61 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 55.
62 *Ibid.*, 53; New York Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Mss.), Oct. 28, 1809.
63 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, pp. 53, 54.

comply with their request." [64] Both committees conferred several times before they agreed upon a compromise scale satisfactory to most concerned.[65]

FINANCING STRIKES

The question of strike benefits received attention from the outset. Thus the Philadelphia journeymen printers in 1786, before embarking upon the first authenticated strike, pledged themselves to support those who were compelled to quit work in order to resist employers who insisted on reducing wages below $6 per week.[66] Similarly the Philadelphia cordwainers paid strike benefits in 1805. Special sums were given to members so as to keep them from deserting the union. Aid was also granted the strikers' families at the rate of 50 cents per head, but only to those "in absolute need." [67] The Pittsburgh cordwainers had "no fixed allowance to poor members on a turn-out." When they "were distressed for market money," they "were allowed to take three or four dollars out of the box." [68]

During this period the printers adhered to the individualistic principle of financing strikes. The society acted as a mutual bank, the money being advanced to those on strike in the form of a loan, and not as at present in the form of an indemnity or benefit. Only when the member was unable to refund the amount advanced him did the society assume collective responsibility. A section in the 1809 constitution of the New York Typographical Society provided that "in every case wherein a member may be thrown out of employ by reason of his refusing to take less than the established prices, they shall advance, if required on his own security . . . such a sum per week as is sufficient to drefray his ordinary expenses. And if such member, by sickness or otherwise, shall be rendered unable to refund the amount . . . the board may levy a tax upon every member of the society . . . to defray the amount advanced. . . ." [69]

64 *Ibid.*, 56; New York Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Mss.), Oct. 28, 1809.

65 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, pp. 51–58; New York Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Mss.), Oct. 30, and Nov. 1, 1809.

66 Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 860.

67 *Doc. Hist.*, III, 83, 85, 122.

68 *Ibid.*, IV, 34.

69 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 45; for a similar practice

It would seem that the journeymen imitated their masters in this respect as they did in the matter of individual bargaining. Most of the masters' associations aided members who were in financial difficulty by loans.[70] The action of the New York journeymen printers in 1811 appears to be quite similar. Knowing that "some of the master printers . . . had refused to give the established prices and that in consequence thereof, some of the members . . . would be out of employ," the Board of Directors "recommended to the general society to levy a tax of $1. on each member who now holds a situation — the money, in case of a turn-out for wages, to be appropriated towards increasing the funds. Otherwise to be returned to those who may pay it." [71]

Only one labour organisation during this period felt strongly the need for a permanent fund to be used for no other purpose than strikes. The New York cordwainers as early as 1805 adopted an article in their constitution making it mandatory that all surplus money, "whenever it amounts to fifty dollars," shall be deposited in the United States Bank and "shall not be drawn on except in case of a stand out, and then left to a majority of the society." [72] Present-day unions require each member to contribute a definite sum at stated periods, while the cordwainers maintained their strike fund out of surplus moneys. The other journeymen societies gave the matter of a strike fund consideration only when a strike was imminent or actually in progress.

BENEFIT FEATURES

Aside from strike benefits the societies also paid sickness and death benefits. In the case of these benefits, likewise, the societies did not have permanent funds. Benefits were paid out of surplus money. Thus Article 17 of the New York printers' constitution provides that "when the funds of the society shall have amounted to $100 the Board of Directors may award such sum to sickly and distressed members, their widows and

by the Philadelphia printers see "A Historical Sketch of the Philadelphia Typographical Society," in *Printers' Circular*, Philadelphia, 1867, a copy of which was kindly supplied us by Ethelbert Stewart of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

70 See above, I, 81, 82.

71 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 60; New York Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Mss.), June 15, 1811.

72 See New York Trial in *Doc. Hist.*, III, 365, Art. V.

children as to them may seem meet and proper. Provided, that such sum shall not exceed $3 per week." [73] The Philadelphia cordwainers helped members in distress, although it was "not an article of the constitution," [74] while the Pittsburgh cordwainers allowed "three dollars a week" to sick members.[75]

STRIKES

It is noticeable that the unions, prior to 1827, did not resort to panaceas. There was, indeed, as yet no "labour philosophy," either of co-operation, agrarianism, socialism, or class struggle.[76] The skilled mechanic might expect to become a master, and it did not occur to him to use his organisation as a means of abolishing the wage system.

The questions at issue were solely those of wages and hours of labour. Even the question of the legality or the illegality of the methods employed by the unions did not lead them to seek legislation or legal remedies. There were no statutes of apprenticeship to be enforced by the courts and hence no occasion for prosecution of employers for violation of such statutes, as was the case in England.[77] The six-year apprenticeship was but a "custom," not a statute, and such a doubtful custom that its enforcement depended solely on the strength of the unions. Even the legality of the strike, or of the refusal to work with non-union men, or of the boycott of "scabs," did not depend on any anti-combination laws, and hence there was no occasion for legislative or political action looking towards their repeal.[78] Even without the suffrage the unions of England secured the repeal of the conspiracy laws in 1824, but in this country only the handful of organised shoemakers suffered from anti-conspiracy prosecutions. The printers' organisations were weak, so that the employers did not find it necessary to look to the courts for aid in checking them. Other wage-earners were not organised. Numerical weakness of itself adequately accounts for the absence of a political programme.

The unionists relied primarily upon the "turn-out," or strike,

73 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 45.
74 *Doc. Hist.*, III, 120.
75 *Ibid.*
76 See Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, chap. ii, for similar situation in England at this time.
77 See *Ibid.*, 44.
78 For the contrary situation in England, see *Ibid.*, 82.

as the most effective means of enforcing their demands upon the masters. The organised strikes, like the unorganised, were disputes over wages. Unlike the latter, they were conducted in an orderly and comparatively peaceful manner. In only one organisation, that of the Philadelphia cordwainers of 1806, is there evidence of violence and intimidation. In that case "scabs" were beaten and employers intimidated by demonstrations in front of the shop or by breaking shop windows.[79] Otherwise, the strikes were conducted peaceably.

A committee was chosen by the union to present a price list or scale of wages to the masters individually.[80] The first complete wage scale presented in this country was drawn up by the Franklin Typographical Society of New York City in 1800.[81] The early price lists continued in force until one party or the other saw fit to make a change. On occasion of a strike, a "tramping committee" would be selected to visit the various places of employment in order "to see that the journeymen are honest to the cause."[82] It seems that the Philadelphia cordwainers found this method inefficient and "thought it requisite to take one man instead of three for the tramping committee, and paid him." Hence, as early as 1799, they introduced the paid walking delegate. This is the only instance of the kind. In other strikes, unpaid committees were used.

In 1799 the Philadelphia shoemakers recognised the importance of completely tying up those employers who would not concede their demands. Since the strike in this instance was directed to raising wages on boots, those who worked on shoes for the same masters requested permission to continue working. This petition was denied, and all journeymen were ordered on strike.[83] A collateral strike was ordered in 1809 by the New York cordwainers. "There was a strike against the shop of Corwin & Aimes, but as it appeared to the society that they contrived to defeat its operation by privately getting their work

79 *Doc. Hist.*, III, 95–101.

80 For a typical "list of prices" presented by printers, see Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 865. The only available price list of shoemakers is contained in *Doc. Hist.*, III, 368.

81 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 39; Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 863.

82 See Philadelphia Cordwainers in *Doc. Hist.*, III, 75.

83 *Ibid.*, 74, 76.

done at other shops, the society, in November, 1809, ordered a general strike against the masters." [84]

CO-OPERATION

In two instances only did the journeymen resort to action other than the strike in attempting to improve their economic conditions. Both were attempts at co-operation, and were outgrowths of strikes. One appears to have been retaliatory, being inaugurated during a strike to force the employers to concede to their demands. The other was an attempt to attain permanent self-employment after losing a strike which had terminated in the conviction of several members for conspiracy. Both methods of co-operation became quite common in succeeding periods. It is generally difficult to distinguish between retaliatory and permanent self-employment co-operation. However, the former is only possible when the required outlay of capital is small. Hence, it could be practised extensively only in the early periods, and in such industries as did not require a large plant and expensive equipment. The latter was the most prevalent panacea resorted to until the decade of the nineties.

During their strike in 1791 the Philadelphia carpenters proposed to "undertake buildings, or give designs, of *any work* in the line of our occupation, for any one who may think advisable to give us employment, at 25 per cent. below the current rate established by the Master-Carpenters, and that we will give any reasonable security for the faithful execution of the work so entrusted to us to perform." They recommended themselves to the public as follows: "Nothing further need be observed, than that the advantages accruing to such as employ *us* (in the place of those who are called masters, and who are now almost without assistance) will be as many and as great, as that work which is done by men who have served a long and regular apprenticeship, is superior to that which is executed by boys and *pretended masters.*" [85] The masters, on the other hand, ac-

[84] New York Cordwainers, 1809, in *Ibid.*, 369, 370.

[85] An Address of the Journeymen Carpenters, in *American Daily Advertiser*, May 11, 1791.

cused the journeymen of reducing prices so as to compel them to submit to their terms, and endeavoured to demonstrate that the journeymen would be the chief sufferers. "The Journeymen agreeing to undertake work at 25 per cent. below the established price, appears to be done more with a design of compelling the masters to a compliance with their terms, than to proceed from an expectation of any advantage which they can possibly receive from working on the conditions they have proposed." Such action, argued the masters, "must eventually operate to their own prejudice, for surely, all will not be masters, and those who are more capable of giving directions and superintending the others, will expect some compensation for their trouble, by which means the wages of those who work as journeymen will be extremely reduced; for if the prices of Master Workmen are diminished, a reduction of Journeymen's wages will follow as a necessary influence."

The masters, however, were seeking chiefly the sympathy of the building public and to them they directed the argument that such reductions as the journeymen had made were unnatural and could not long continue. From this they concluded that the action of the journeymen was bound to "injure themselves and others" without benefitting anyone. "The wages of all artificers must be regulated by the number of persons wanting employment: high wages induce Masters to increase the number of apprentices, and journeymen to come from other places: low wages produce the contrary effect. It is not, therefore, in the power of any set of them in a free country to keep the price of labour much below, or raise it far above, a certain medium, for any great length of time together, although they may by confederating together, for some time injure themselves and others of the same occupation, by undertaking work at a price lower than that at which it can reasonably be performed." [86]

An attempt at permanent self-employment through co-operation was made by the journeymen cordwainers of Philadelphia in 1806, following their conviction for conspiracy. This form of co-operation has been frequently resorted to since that time by other workmen despondent of trade union action on account of reverses in strikes. Failing to better their condition

[86] *Ibid.*, May 14, 1791.

as wage-earners they determined to become their own employers through co-operation. The journeymen cordwainers had even greater reason for feeling discouraged about trade union action than those who lost out in strikes. According to the opinion of the judge this labour organisation was in itself illegal,[87] and this forced the alternative of either hopelessly bowing to the dictates of their employers or becoming employers themselves. From the following advertisement it will be seen that they chose the latter alternative:

"Boots and Shoes.

"The Journeymen Cordwainers, of the city of Philadelphia, respectfully acquaint its inhabitants that they have opened a boot and shoe warehouse . . . where they intend to carry on the business, wholesale and retail. The unprecedented trial which issued in their conviction, as well as the unfortunate circumstances in which they found themselves after so long a contest, are the causes, which have induced them to make this trial of public liberality and public justice; they have been compelled to resort to this undertaking as the only expedient left them to maintain themselves and families from the most abject dependence. They have had no other alternative but adopting this course or submitting to employers who could take away or lessen their wages whenever their caprice or avarice might prompt them. Besides, under other circumstances they could not associate for the purpose of opposing tyranny and grievances, or for the purpose of regulating the value of their own labour, without being deemed and punished as conspirators — a punishment which they fondly imagined and believed could not be inflicted under the laws of a free and enlightened commonwealth. All these considerations, they hope, will have due weight with the public, from which they ask only such countenance and protection as they shall merit by their industry and endeavours to give satisfaction.

"The wages, which they claimed themselves, and for asking which they were punished, they intend to give to those who may be employed by them. They have therefore engaged the best workmen in the city, and will spare no pains to give satisfaction to such as may favour them with their custom. Their work shall be made of the very best materials and sold at the most moderate prices.

"In behalf of the journeymen,
"Peter Polin,
"Undriel Barnes." [88]

[87] See below. I. 140. 141.

[88] Philadelphia *Aurora*, Apr. 28, 1806.

It is not known what success this co-operative warehouse had, nor how long it continued in existence.

CLOSED SHOP

Just as the strike was the direct means of enforcing demands upon the employers, so the closed shop, in addition to being a corollary of the strike, was also the indirect method of enforcing and maintaining demands. The term, "closed shop," is, of course, quite recent in origin, but it aptly describes the policy adopted by the cordwainers of Philadelphia when they effected their first permanent organisation in 1794, as well as by the other cordwainer societies. It consisted partly in compelling the employer to retain none but society men in his shop and partly in preventing non-society men from getting employment.

The Philadelphia, New York, and Pittsburgh cordwainers required outsiders to join them as soon as they came to town, and the New York cordwainers imposed a heavy fine for failure to do so.[89] The Pittsburgh society even went so far as to exercise jurisdiction over non-members, requiring them to appear at meetings and defend themselves against charges, remitting a fine only on condition that the offender promise to join the society.[90] Scabs were hounded and heavily punished.[91] One manufacturer in Philadelphia, who refused to discharge a scab, held out for over a year and a half, but was finally forced to move his business to another city.[92] Other employers were compelled to pay the fines of the scabs or to instruct the scabs to do so themselves under pain of discharge.[93]

It was as a means of disciplining the scab that the boycott was first thought of. Here again the shoemakers were the pioneers. The Philadelphia cordwainers refused to eat at the same boarding house where non-union men boarded. This social ostracism proved effective.[94] Boycotting of commodities was unknown.

The strategic hold of the shoemakers, owing to scarcity of

89 Philadelphia Trial, 1806, in *Doc. Hist.*, III, 95, 367, 384; IV, 35–39; Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 104.

90 *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 35, 36.

91 *Ibid.*, III, 77, 80, 82, 97, 139, 382; IV, 33.

92 *Ibid.*, III, 79.

93 *Ibid.*, 98; IV, 43, 49.

94 Philadelphia Trial in *Ibid.*, III, 95.

men in their trade, is illustrated by the following complaint of a master at the Pittsburgh conspiracy trial: "Some of the journeymen were tramping out of town, and I was afraid if I did not give the wages I would not have a stock of work to go down the river." [95] Another, who employed 11 journeymen did no business at all during the turn-out in 1815,[96] while a third, who ordinarily hired from 14 to 22 journeymen, had only 3 during the strike.[97]

While the cordwainers generally took the aggressive, demanding outright from the masters an absolute closed shop, the printers, less strongly organised, groped their way cautiously and meekly, made demands, but did not press for their enforcement.[98] Their attitude, however, was stated by the New York printers in 1809 as follows: "In all classes of society, experience has proved that there have been men who, laying aside those principles of honor and good faith which ought to govern their conduct towards their brethren, and for a mere gratification of private interest, have set aside the obligations they were under, by violating the ordinance which they have pledged themselves to maintain. It is for the interest of the profession that such persons . . . should be discountenanced. . . ." [99]

The printers denounced scabs but did little else. The cordwainers not only denounced them but made their exclusion from employment the whip of union discipline. "The scab law," said one of their witnesses in Philadelphia, "was a stimulus to the members to support what they undertook." [1]

The theory of the closed shop was propounded by counsel for the New York cordwainers in defending them against conspiracy charges. He explained their refusal to work with those who violated "the rules and ordinances" of the union as follows: "If the majority of the workmen were content with their wages, the majority would be harmless; but if an individual will seek to better himself at the expense of his fellows, when they are suffering privation to obtain terms, it is not hard

95 *Ibid.*, IV, 53.
96 *Ibid.*, 46, 48.
97 *Ibid.*, 48.
98 Barnett, *The Printers*, 711, 712.
99 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 50; New York Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Mss.), Sept. 9, 1809; see also *Doc. Hist.*, III, 83.
1 *Ibid.*, 73, 86, 95.

that they leave him to his employers; and the most inoffensive manner in which they can show their displeasure is by shaking the dust off their feet, and leaving the shop where he is engaged." He contended "that in times of public division no man should be neutral," which "*tended to obviate the evils of deception and dissimulation.* It prevented matters from being carried to extremity, as it gave each party a clear knowledge of its own strength, and furnished a measure by which the success of the struggle might be foreseen, and useless contest avoided." [2]

EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATIONS

The cordwainers of New York offered to prove in court that their purpose in resorting to the alleged illegal conspiracy was the purely defensive one of resisting an organisation of masters. They affirmed "that long ago, prior to the strike or turn-out, there was a combination of the masters for the express purpose of lowering the wages of the workingmen, and which was oppressive to them, and that the society originated in the necessity of protecting themselves against such combinations. . . ." [3] The evidence, however, was not admitted. In Philadelphia the cordwainers also alleged that the employers had organised first and had forced the employés to imitate them in self-defense.[4]

However, the documentary proof tends to contradict the contention of the Philadelphia journeymen. It is true that an organisation of masters existed before that of the wage-earners' society. The Philadelphia Society of Master Cordwainers was organised in 1789, while the first society of the journeymen cordwainers was founded in 1792. But a study of the constitution indicates plainly that the masters were organised as merchants to prevent certain forms of market competition detrimental to the trade. The purpose of their organisation is shown by their qualification for membership. "No person shall be elected a member of this society who offers for sale any boots, shoes, etc., in the public market of this city, or advertises the prices of his work, in any of the public

2 New York Trial, 1810, in *Ibid.*, 294.
3 Cordwainers' Trial, in *Ibid.*, 371.
4 Argument of counsel for Philadelphia Cordwainers in *Ibid.*, 166.

papers or hand-bills, so long as he continues in these practices." [5] It will readily be seen that an association formed for this purpose was interested in the merchant-function of raising prices rather than the employer-function of reducing wages. Furthermore, no evidence was presented to show that the masters had used methods designed to exclude non-members from access to the market. This merchants' association was dissolved before the cordwainers' society was founded, and the subsequent association of masters in 1798 was a defensive employers' association.[6]

The early method of negotiation resorted to by the journeymen in Philadelphia also indicates that the masters' organisation did not exist for the purpose of dealing with employés. This first attempt to secure better wages was not a concerted demand made upon the employer, but an agreement among themselves that each individual member should refuse to work for less than the agreed minimum.[7] Had the masters been previously organised to attack unorganised journeymen, it is hardly likely that the latter would have left the matter to individual bargaining when they finally organised.

As soon, however, as the wage question became serious the employers either adapted their mercantile organisation to serve an additional function, or proceeded to form an association to guard their interests as employers. The former was the case of the master shoemakers' association of Pittsburgh, in 1814, which in 1812 was created as a merchant, or price-fixing association, and later, as wage difficulties arose, gradually took on also the employer function.[8] The latter was the case of the master cordwainers of Philadelphia in 1798.

Once organised, the masters occasionally consented to negotiate with the journeymen societies, if they found themselves powerless. They also granted the demands of the society when there was no other way out.[9] Yet at all times they sought the opportunity "to break them up altogether, root and branch." [10] In 1809 the printer-employers of New York capitulated and "accepted the terms of the union merely to gain time to recruit

[5] *Ibid.*, 128.
[6] *Ibid.*, 27, 128, 129, 166, 174, 175.
[7] See above, I, 121.
[8] *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 28, 29, 47, 52, 55.
[9] See above, I, 122.
[10] Philadelphia Trial, in *Ibid.*, III, 127.

a sufficient force of workmen outside the city to take the places of members when an opportune moment arrived." [11]

While the masters in the printing and shoemaking industries were in accord as to their opposition to journeymen's societies, they differed in their tactical procedure. The employing printers found it sufficient to advertise in other localities for compositors and pressmen, offering permanent positions at good wages. The masters in Philadelphia in 1803 advertised for pressmen in Baltimore and New York. The masters in New York, in 1809, distributed circular letters throughout Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, hoping thereby to flood the market and ultimately to destroy the wage-earners' organisation.[12] That they succeeded in part we know by the journeymen's conciliatory attitude.[13] The master cordwainers, however, unable to flood the labour market, sought the aid of the courts.

DEPRESSION AND ITS EFFECTS ON UNIONS

Even those journeymen societies that weathered their first strikes and continued in existence for a considerable length of time were severely affected by the depression which set in at the close of the Napoleonic wars. While the French Revolution and the long embargo of the later wars destroyed most of our commerce they stimulated our industrial development. The conclusion of the wars resulted in "dumping" and otherwise excessive importations from abroad. These "enormous importations which burthened the warehouses of the merchants, and soon after fell greatly in price, were fraught with the most dis-

11 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 58: New York Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Ms.), Nov. 11, and Dec. 16, 1809.

12 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, pp. 58, 59. The following advertisement and counter advertisement were inserted in the Philadelphia *Aurora*, Baltimore *Telegraph*, and New York *Daily Advertiser* by the master and journeymen printers of Philadelphia:

"To Printers: Sober young men from the country who have been accustomed to press work will constantly meet with employment at the highest prices on application to" [Signed by five master printers] —

"To Printers: We, the undersigned directors of the Phila. Typographical Society, assure all 'sober young men' now in the country, who may have been accustomed to 'press work' that workmen of that description may easily be obtained here by those offices were situations are eligible, and the employment permanent, and we therefore do not hesitate to declare that the advertisements which frequently appear, inviting them to town are often delusive; and we are sorry to add sometimes cause the undutiful and thoughtless to stray from their masters." [Signed by 13 directors] — From Philadelphia *Aurora*, Aug. 20, 1803; Philadelphia Typographical Society, *Minutes* (Ms.), Aug. 18, 1803.

13 See above, I, 120.

astrous consequences. Many were compelled to close their factories, in which their whole capitals were invested. Many others, who ventured to continue, became hopelessly bankrupt in the end." [14] Conditions were further accentuated by over-investment and the collapse of currency inflation.[15] As a consequence of this turn in fortune large numbers of workmen were thrown out of employment. Thus 30 branches of industry in Philadelphia which, in 1816 employed 9,672 workmen, had discharged 7,500 of them by 1819.[16] *Niles' Register* reported that in 1819 there were 20,000 persons daily seeking work in Philadelphia, with an equal number in a like predicament in New York, and about 10,000 in Baltimore in unsteady employment or actually suffering because all opportunities for making a living were closed.[17]

The depression forced the journeymen societies either to disband or to subordinate their economic activities. In the case of the cordwainer associations it is only possible to conjecture that the industrial reaction caused their dissolution. We know they survived the conspiracy prosecutions, for we find indirect traces of their existence as late as 1815 in the testimony at the Pittsburgh cordwainers' trial.[18] On the other hand, new unions were founded in this trade in the later periods. Since the early organisations of cordwainers did not appear in the succeeding revivals of business we conclude that they were victims of the industrial crisis.

From the records of the New York and Washington printers we know the effect of changed conditions upon those societies that were able to continue. These documents also tell us how they adjusted themselves to a period of depression. The records of the Philadelphia Typographical Society have also been preserved and from them we learn that a disastrous strike

14 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II, 210–213, 235–236, 247–251; McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, IV, 344–346; "A Century of Social Betterment," in *Atlantic Monthly*, LXXIX, 23; Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States*, 272–275.

15 Johnson, *History of Domestic and Foreign Commerce of the United States*, I, 216–218; Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States*, 275; Coman, *Industrial History of United States*, 189, 200; Turner, Rise of the New West, 135–136; Taussig, *Tariff History of the United States*, 69; Babcock, *The Rise of American Nationality, 1811–1819*, 233–234.

16 McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, IV, 491, 349; see also Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States*, 379, 380.

17 Quoted in Simons, *Social Forces in American History*, 166.

18 See for instance *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 17; see also above, I, 60, 64.

which it experienced in 1810 had the same influence upon it as the industrial crisis had upon the other journeymen organisations.[19] Indeed depression and disastrous strikes bear a close relationship, for serious reverses in trades disputes generally occur during periods of depression. In either case the union suffers a marked decline in membership. Thus in 1809 the Philadelphia Typographical Society had a membership of 119, which shrank to 55 in 1810,[20] the year when it met overwhelming defeat in a strike.[21] Likewise, the secretary of the New York Typographical Society reported, October, 1817, that, out of 84 members in good standing the previous year, 25 were in arrears from 6 to 12 months, and 20 from 3 to 6 months.[22]

The spectre of unemployment also made its appearance. The Philadelphia society found it necessary to appoint a committee in 1817 to "take all just and honorable methods of procuring situations for" its unemployed members.[23] Similar methods were resorted to by the New York printers when trade was slack.

Another effect of depression and reverses in strikes upon the printers' societies was the shift from economic action to insurance benefits. The societies that showed greatest permanency almost invariably had well-established benefit funds. In all probability this feature was the chief incentive for maintaining the organisation during depression.[24] The cordwainer societies did not have extensive benefit funds, and apparently disbanded when their organisations became economically impotent.

The three printers' organisations whose records we have were conceived as societies to regulate trade matters. Benefit features were also adopted, but not with the intention of supplanting or hampering economic action. Indeed the prime motive for founding the societies was the need of regulating trade matters.[25] But when, in the course of their experience, the

19 The Baltimore and Albany printer societies also survived the depression, but nothing is known of their activities during that time. The Boston printers were the only ones of the trade to disband. See Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 883, 885–890; Barnett, *The Printers*, 435–439.

20 Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 885, contains a membership list by years from 1802–1851.

21 *Ibid.*, 881.

22 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 76.

23 Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 883.

24 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 71.

25 See Barnett, *The Printers*, 438.

societies became powerless as trade organisations, they began to regard the benevolent side as the most promising function of the association. Hence, following its fatal strike in 1810, the Philadelphia Typographical Society by an act of incorporation willingly risked its status as a trade-regulating body in order to secure its benefit funds.[26] Likewise, the New York printers, in their eagerness to make their benefit funds secure, in 1818, agreed completely to surrender their trade union functions when the legislature declined to grant an act of incorporation on any other terms.[27]

On the other hand, the Columbia Typographical Society, being located at the seat of government, whose volume of printing was hardly affected by commercial oscillations, succeeded in retaining its economic features. This was accomplished with no little bitter and constant struggle. The society was divided into two factions, the "industrialists" and the "alimoners." The latter element became very formidable during the business decline, and only because the president cast the deciding vote against its resolution did it fail in 1821 to make the society primarily benevolent.[28]

26 *Ibid.*, 444; Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 881.

27 Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 78.

28 Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 886, 892, 893.

CHAPTER V

CORDWAINERS' CONSPIRACY CASES, 1806–1815

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ALTOGETHER six criminal conspiracy cases are recorded against the shoemakers. One occurred in Philadelphia, 1806 [1]; one in New York City, 1809 [2]; two in Baltimore, 1809 [3]; and two in Pittsburgh, the first in 1814,[4] and the other in 1815.[5] Four of the cases were decided against the journeymen. In one of the Baltimore cases judgment was rendered in favour of the journeymen, and the 1814 Pittsburgh case was compromised, the shoemakers paying the cost and returning to work at the old wages. There is very little information as to the two Baltimore cases and the first Pittsburgh case. These prosecutions were the first in this country in which employers invoked the aid of the courts and the law in their struggle with labour. It was brought out in the testimony that the masters financed, in part at least, the New York and Pittsburgh prosecutions.[6]

That other employers of labour were much interested is evident from the dedication of the Pittsburgh case of 1815, penned by the reporter, "To the Manufacturers and Mechanics. . . .

1 Philadelphia Trial in *Doc. Hist.*, III, 59.
2 *Ibid.*, 251.
3 *Ibid.*, 249.
4 *Ibid.*, IV, 27.
5 *Ibid.*, 15.
6 *Ibid.*, III, 164, 371; IV, 29.

This Trial, Involving Principles essential to their interest, is humbly dedicated, by their Obedient Servant. . . ." [7]

Similarly, in his preface the reporter remarks that:

"Perhaps he would not . . . have undertaken to report it, but for the pressing solicitations of many respectable Mechanics and Manufacturers. . . . The verdict of that jury is most important to the manufacturing interests of the community; it puts an end to those associations which have been so prejudicial to the successful enterprize of the capitalists of the western country. But this case is not important to this country alone; it proves beyond possibility of doubt, that notwithstanding the adjudications in New York, and Philadelphia, there still exists in those cities, combinations which extend their deleterious influence to every part of the union. The inhabitants of those cities, the manufacturers particularly, are bound by their interests, as well as the duties they owe [the] community, to watch those combinations with a jealous eye, and to prosecute to conviction, and subject to the penalties of the law, conspiracies so subversive to the best interests of the country." [8]

LEGAL ISSUES

The prosecutions were conducted under the English common-law doctrine of criminal conspiracy. At the time of the first case, in 1806, a heated political controversy was going on as to whether the English common law applied in this country. The Federalists, who had control of the judiciary, were applying the law whenever opportunity presented itself. The Democratic Republicans, or Jeffersonians, attacked the Federalist judges and in some cases even succeeded in impeaching them. Consequently, when the journeymen were indicted the Democrats, especially in Philadelphia and Baltimore, defended them through their newspapers and otherwise.[9]

The two most famous legal champions in this dispute participated as counsel in the Philadelphia case in 1806. Jared Ingersoll, the foremost protagonist of the English common law, represented the prosecution; while Cæsar A. Rodney, its staunchest antagonist, defended the journeymen.

The issue was raised in all the cases, and the courts ruled

7 Pittsburgh Trial, in *Ibid.*, 15.

8 *Ibid.*, 16.

9 See McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, III, 153 *et seq.*, 512; also Glocker, *Trade Unionism in Baltimore before the War of 1812*, Johns Hopkins University, *Circular*, No. 196, April, 1907, p. 28; Philadelphia Trial in *Doc. Hist.*, III, 67.

in all that the common law was the law of this country.[10] The question then arose what are illegal acts under the common law of criminal conspiracy?

The numerous counts in the indictments on record charged two offences: [11] one was a combination to raise wages; the other a combination to injure others.[12]

To the public at large, including those who sympathised with and those who condemned the journeymen, the prosecutions appeared to be based on the charge that a combination to raise wages was illegal. Thus the reporter's title to the Philadelphia case reads "a combination and conspiracy to raise wages"; and the New York case is called "a conspiracy to raise their wages." The attorneys on both sides also emphasised this charge. Likewise the verdict of the jury in the Philadelphia prosecution reads: "We find the defendants guilty of a combination to raise their wages." [13] Naturally the defence took advantage of this and insisted that the charge was nothing but an attempt to prevent the journeymen from improving their condition.[14]

No doubt the object of the masters was to prevent the workingmen from combining effectively to raise their wages. Each of the trials followed upon the heels of a stubborn strike in which this was the chief demand. The public, being aware of this, concluded that the prosecutions were against combinations to raise wages. The attorneys for the prosecution made as many charges as possible, while counsel for the journeymen tried to make this the only issue. In reality the Philadelphia case is the only one during this period in which the judge declared it to be illegal for workmen to combine to raise their wages.[15] In instructing the jury he said: "A combination of workmen to raise their wages may be considered in a twofold

10 *Ibid.*, 155, 313; IV, 76; see also instructions to jury.

11 The following analysis of legal issues has been made by E. E. Witte, in connection with the preparation of his book on *Courts in Labor Disputes* and his contribution on "The Law of Conspiracy," chap. iii, in Commons and Andrews, *Principles of Labor Legislation*.

12 From the scant material on the Baltimore cases it would seem that in at least one of them the charge was only injury to third parties.

13 Philadelphia Trial in *Doc. Hist.*, III, 236.

14 *Ibid.*, 62, 140, 256; IV, 56, 57; Stevens, *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 102.

15 The same position was taken by Chief Justice Savage in the Geneva Shoemakers' case in 1836. See below, I, 406 *et seq.*

point of view: one is benefit to themselves . . . the other is to injure those who do not join the society. The rule of law condemns both." [16] As has already been indicated, the jury accepted the judges' interpretation of the law and found the journeymen "guilty of a combination to raise wages." [17]

The Philadelphia decision gave the democratic elements an opportunity further to attack the Federalist judges and the English common law. It was maintained that to deny the workmen the right to combine in order to improve their condition, in view of the multitude of organisations existing in other walks of life, would be worse than tyranny.[18] The question was asked: "Shall all others, except only the industrious mechanics be allowed to meet and plot; merchants to determine their prices current, or settle the markets, politicians to electioneer, sportsmen for horse-racing and games, ladies and gentlemen for balls, parties and bouquets; and yet these poor men be indicted for combining against starvation . . .?" [19] Such "a policy" it was contended is "incompatible with the existence of freedom, and prostrates every right which distinguishes the citizen from the slave." [20]

The cordwainers appealed to the democratic public even before the verdict was rendered. Immediately upon their indictment they issued a lengthy protest in "vindication" of their action and in condemnation of the attempt to stamp it a conspiracy. Their statement, which was printed in the *Aurora,* reads in part as follows:

"In the constitution of this state, it is declared . . . 'that the citizens have a right in a peaceable manner to assemble together for the common good.' For fifteen years and upwards we have assembled together in a peaceable manner and for our common good, and to guard against the accidents to which industrious men are exposed to promote the happiness of the individuals of which our little community is composed, and to render service to those whom age or infirmity may have rendered incapable of labor. . . . The master shoemakers, as they are called after the slavish style of Europe, but who are only the retailers of our labor, and who in truth live upon the work of our hands, are generally men of

16 Philadelphia Trial in *Doc. Hist.*, III, 233.
17 *Ibid.*, 236.
18 Philadelphia Trial, *Ibid.*, 175.
19 *Ibid.*, 279.
20 *Ibid.*, IV, 62.

large property, to whom the suspension of business, though it is a loss, is not so great a loss as the total suspension of the means of subsistence, is to us who obtain our income from week to week. These masters as they are called, and who would be masters and tyrants if they could, or the law would allow them, have their associations, their meetings, and they pass their resolutions; but as they are rich and we are poor — they seem to think that we are not protected by the constitution in meeting peaceably together and pursuing our own happiness. They suppose that they have a right to limit us at all times, and whatever may be the misfortune of society, the changes in the value of necessaries, the encrease or the decrease of trade, they think they have the right to determine for us the value of our labor; but that we have no right to determine for ourselves, what we will or what we will not take in exchange for our labor. . . . If the association of men to regulate the price of their own labor, is to be converted into a crime, and libeled with the same reproachful terms as a design against the freedom of the nation; the prospect is a very sad one for Pennsylvania. . . . What we have here said, will inform the public, of our conduct, and will shew that under whatever pretences the thing is done, the name of freedom is but a shadow, if for doing, what the laws of our country authorise, we are to have taskmasters to measure out our pittance of subsistence — if we are to be torn from our fireside for endeavouring to obtain a fair and just support for our families, and if we are to be treated as felons and murderers only for asserting the right to take or refuse what we deem an adequate reward for our labor." [21]

The Philadelphia *Aurora,* one of the leading Jeffersonian newspapers in the country, made the fight of the workmen its own, and bitterly arraigned the court and the law under which the journeymen cordwainers were convicted. The tenor of its argument is epitomised in the following quotation taken from one of its editorials:

"Hitherto the people had travelled the level road to equal justice. . . . Of all the barbarous principles of feudalism entailed on us by England, none was left but slavery, and even this would be generally restricted in 1808. Yet, would it be believed, at the very time when the state of the negro was about to be improved attempts were being made to reduce the whites to slavery. Was there anything in the Constitution of the United States or in the Consitution of Pennsylvania which gave one man a right to say to another what should be the price of labor? There was not.

21 "The Address of the Working Shoemakers of the City of Philadelphia to the Public," in Philadelphia *Aurora*, Nov. 28, 1805.

It was by the English common law that such things became possible." [22]

Even though the workers were in the main unfranchised, the judiciary deemed it expedient in the succeeding cases to shift the emphasis in the law.[23] In doing this they were influenced by the fact that the cause of labour was championed by such a powerful and recently victorious political element as the Jeffersonians. The prevailing public opinion that workmen ought not to be prosecuted for associating in the same manner as their masters also had weight. Consequently, while in the New York cordwainers' case in 1809 the indictment was substantially identical with that of the preceding Philadelphia case, the court's charge to the jury was very different. Nothing was said about the illegality of combinations to raise wages; on the contrary, the jury was instructed that this was not the question at issue. The issue was stated to be, whether the defendants had combined to secure an increase in their wages by unlawful means. This charge was in accordance with the common law, which condemned not only combinations to increase wages, but also combinations to effect lawful purposes by illegal means.

The instructions of the New York judge did not mean any radical change in the law, but represented an important change in emphasis. Prosecutions for combining to raise wages were unpopular. But when the emphasis was shifted, the journeymen themselves seemed to be the oppressors. To the public, no doubt, the court's instructions in the New York case seemed eminently fair. It was stated in this case that the journeymen had equal rights with other members of the community, that they could regulate their own affairs and could determine the wages for which they would work, and might lawfully refuse to accept less; "but that the means they used were of a nature too arbitrary and coercive, and which went to deprive their fellow citizens of rights as precious as any they contended for." [24]

22 Quoted by McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, III. 512; see also Philadelphia *Aurora*, Mar. 31, 1806.

23 For the political status of workmen during the formation of the Constitution see Beard, *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution;* and for the first quarter of the nineteenth century see McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, III. 146 *et seq.*

24 *Doc. Hist.*, III. 385.

The journeymen, however, were not satisfied with the law as interpreted in this case. On their behalf it was contended "that the moment it was admitted that the object of the conspiracy was not criminal there ought to be an end to the prosecution, and the doctrine and argument touching a conspiracy to do a lawful act by unlawful means seemed . . . a distinction without a difference, an unnecessary refinement, and at best a begging of the question." [25] As a legal proposition this contention was unsound, inasmuch as it was well established in the common law that a conspiracy may be either a combination of two or more persons to do an unlawful act, or a combination to do a lawful act by unlawful means. In this New York case it was this second part of the definition which was held to apply.

When the means which a combination uses to effect its ends are made the test of its legality, the all-important question is, what means are illegal? In this case the only answer given to this question was that "coercive and arbitrary" means are unlawful. The conduct of the journeymen which was especially condemned was their refusal to work with non-members, and particularly their action in procuring the discharge of a workman who had refused to pay a fine which the cordwainers' society had imposed. Upon these facts the defendants were convicted of conspiracy and fined $1 each and costs. That the fines were so light was perhaps in part due to fear of adverse criticism, such as had followed the Philadelphia case of 1806. Doubtless also the fact that these defendants were not tried until months after they had been indicted had much to do with the light penalty.

The Pittsburgh cordwainers' case in 1815, grew out of a strike for higher wages, as did the preceding cases. Moreover, as in earlier cases, one of the charges in the indictment in this case was that the defendants had conspired to raise their wages. It was charged further that the members of the cordwainers' society had refused to work for any master who should employ non-members.

As in all these cases, the defence in this case claimed that the journeymen were being prosecuted because they had com-

[25] *Ibid.*, 355, 374.

bined to raise their wages. The prosecution just as insistently denied that this was the nature of the charge. Judge Roberts in his instructions to the jury took the latter view. He said that "it was not for demanding high prices that these men were indicted, but for employing unlawful means to extort those prices." Thus, he took very much the same position as the court had taken in the New York cordwainers' case. In the Pittsburgh case, however, the court explained its meaning more fully. Judge Roberts said that "where diverse persons confederate together by direct means to impoverish or prejudice a third person, or to do acts — prejudicial to the community," they are engaged in an unlawful conspiracy. Concretely, it is unlawful to "conspire to compel an employer to hire a certain description of persons," or to "conspire to prevent a man from freely exercising his trade in a particular place," or to "conspire to compel men to become members of a particular society; or to contribute toward it," or when persons "conspire to compel men to work at certain prices." Thus, it was the effort of the cordwainers' society to secure a closed shop which fell chiefly under the condemnation of the court.[26]

This Pittsburgh case is notable as an early instance of a clear exposition of the nature of the charge of conspiracy. Counsel for the indicted cordwainers insisted that what is lawful for one individual is lawful for a combination of individuals.[27] The court would not countenance this view, rejecting it on the ground that there was a basic difference in effect between an individual doing a thing and a combination of individuals doing the same thing. "In many cases of conspiracy, the means employed have a semblance of being lawful. They are frequently such as would be lawful in an individual. For instance, you have a right to have your boots, your coat, or your hat made by whom you please. You may decline employing any particular shoemaker, tailor, or hatter, at your pleasure: You may advise your neighbours not to employ a particular mechanic. But should you combine and confederate with others, to ruin any

26 *Ibid.*, IV, 81–85.

27 It is interesting to recall that in 1906 the English labor conspiracy law was amended so as to conform almost precisely to this argment of the cordwainers' attorneys in 1815.

particular shoemaker, tailor, hatter, or other mechanic, or trades-man by preventing persons from employing him, this would be unlawful and indictable." Then Judge Roberts cited the classic argument: "A spectator at a theatre might express his disapprobation of an actor, which is usually manifested by hissing, without committing any public offence. But if a number were to conspire, and confederate to ruin an actor; to prevent him from exercising his profession, by hissing him off the stage, this would be indictable." [28]

Another feature of this case which deserves special notice is the emphasis which was given to the idea that the defendants' conduct was harmful to the public. This thesis was urged also in the Philadelphia cordwainers' case in 1806, but was not brought in at all in the New York case of 1809. In the Pittsburgh case it was given much more prominence than the claim that the journeymen's societies invaded the rights of individuals — non-members and employers. Judge Roberts condemned the conduct of the defendants because it tended "to create a monopoly or to restrain the entire freedom of trade." He drew an analogy between the limits placed upon the municipality and those upon the association, showing that if the society were allowed to practise the acts of which it was accused it would have greater power than the municipality: "A by-law restraining trade would be void. A by-law to prohibit journeymen shoemakers from residing in Pittsburgh, unless they should become members of and contribute to, a certain association; or unless they would work at certain prices; or prohibiting a master workman from employing whomsoever he pleased would be ridiculously tyrannical. It would be void. If the municipality cannot thus restrain trade, or interfere with the rights of the citizens, shall such restraint be imposed by a combination of individuals? Can that be lawful and right in the one, which would be tyrannical and void in the other?" [29]

POLITICAL ISSUES

The conspiracy cases were each tried before a jury which was judge both of law and fact. In only one trial, that of

[28] Pittsburgh Trial, in *Ibid.*, IV, 82, 83. [29] *Ibid.*, 81, 82.

Philadelphia, are the occupations of the jurors given, and the list indicates that there were 9 merchants and perhaps 3 masters.[30]

The advocates on the sides of both masters and journeymen, appreciated that "it was but labour in vain" to dwell alone on abstract questions of law; "for it never could be expected from the most intelligent jurors that ever were empannelled that they should in the accidental discharge of a duty for which they had no previous course of preparation, follow the ablest and clearest logician through a range of argument which it must have cost a practised and educated lawyer so much time and trouble to compose."[31] Therefore, everyone concerned did his utmost to introduce the "human interest" feature to the advantage of his cause. Considering that no precedent could be presented by either side to show whether that portion of the English common law, under which conviction was sought, applied in this country, it was good tactics to appeal to the feelings of the jurors. Guided by this spirit the trials took on the aspect of political meetings or discussions before a legislative body. Lengthy appeals were made with the hope of enkindling the economic, political, and emotional pride and prejudice of the jurors.

Both sides made political capital out of the incidents connected with the trials. One side vehemently assailed the common law as barbarous and undemocratic, and the other enthusiastically upheld it as the bulwark of our institutions.

A lawyer for the defence characterised the common law as "disgusting" and an "object of horror to every feeling and reflecting mind." "Instead of being, as it ought to be, an emanation from the law of nature and morality, it has too often been avowedly and systematically the reverse. It has been a combination of the strong against the weak, of the rich against the poor, of pride and interest against justice and humanity."[32] Another pictured the evil consequences from applying the common law in this country: "The avarice of the Patricians drove the people of Rome to the *mons sacer*. Who is the people

30 Two innkeepers, 1 merchant, 3 grocers, 1 hatter, 1 tobacconist, 1 watchmaker, 1 tailor, 1 tavern keeper, and 1 bottler.

31 New York Trial, in *Ibid.*, III, 380.

32 Philadelphia Trial, in *Ibid.*, 161, 261.

hating Appius Claudius that would do so here? And if it be done, which of these sleek and pampered masters . . . will take upon him the office of Agrippa, to cajole them with a parable, how he is all belly and they all members; how his vocation is to eat and repose, theirs to work and starve." [33]

On the other hand, counsel for the prosecution defended and praised the common law, for "it abounds with principles, which, in their application, are calculated to attain and establish every right, and to redress every wrong, in a state of society. It is a system founded on reason: matured and corrected by constant investigation, and the decisions of learned men, through a succession of ages." [34] Another lauded its beneficent results in the following manner:

"Why do I love the common law, especially the criminal part? I will tell you, and I think you will say that I have reason on my side, I am one of the people. Because, as Mr. Randolph says, it enabled Horne Took, Thomas Hardy and Mr. Thelwall, with a jury, to pass unhurt through the flames of ministerial prosecution. Because, to the common law we are indebted for trial by jury, grand and petit. . . . Because, it secures me a fair trial by challenges, the laws of evidence confronting me with my accuser, and exempting me from accusing myself, or being twice liable to trial for the same offence. . . . Abolish the common law, judging not by instances, but by principle, where are you? Show me an indictment of any kind, even for assault and battery, it is bottomed on common law; with us we have no cause of proceeding in criminal cases but by the modes of the common law, except in cases of murder or treason." [35]

The judges, also, appealed to the jury, by exalting the common law and expressing profound regret that "some have ignorantly disparaged it." [36]

The prosecution in its anxiety "to establish the principle by the decision of the court, and the correspondent verdict of a jury," felt that the "feelings" and "consciences" of the jurors should be not only aroused, but also alleviated. Consequently they assured them that the sole purpose was that of establishing the illegality of the measures, and that, if they hesitated in rendering a verdict of guilty for fear that the punishment might

33 New York Trial, in *Ibid.*, 272.
34 Pittsburgh Trial, in *Ibid.*, IV, 80.
35 Pittsburgh Trial, in *Ibid.*, III, 223, 224.
36 *Ibid.*, IV, 80; see also Philadelphia Trial, in *Ibid.*, III, 232.

be severe, "no men will be more ready than the prosecution to shield the journeymen from any disagreeable consequences from a conviction. . . ." [37] The fines were comparatively light, as shown above, and without sentences to imprisonment, whether influenced by the promises of the prosecution or the criticisms of the Jeffersonians.[38]

COMMERCIAL APPEAL

The lawyers on both sides kept before the minds of the jury the idea that the economic and commercial future of the community depended upon their decision. The prosecution urged that "the policy of permitting such associations" of journeymen to exist will result in "the increasing avarice of these men," and prove highly "prejudicial to the interests" of the community. "For it is well known that the prosperity of both depends greatly upon their manufactures." [39] The infant industry argument and the plea that manufactures must be encouraged were used eloquently and effectually. The Philadelphia prosecutor explained the predicament as follows: "Those best acquainted with our situation, believe that manufactures will bye and bye, become one of its chief means of support. A vast quantity of manufactured articles are already exported to the West Indies, and the southern states; we rival the supplies from England in many things, and great sums are annually received in return. It is then proper to support this manufacture. Will you permit men to destroy it, who have no permanent stake in the city; men who can pack up their all in a knapsack, or carry them in their pockets to New York or Baltimore?" [40] The presiding judge in the Pittsburgh trial added: "We should indeed have abundance of the manufactured articles; but we should cease to be the manufacturers Is this a slight consideration in a manufacturing town? And can they be guiltless who enter into combinations which have a manifest tendency to produce such a result?" [41]

37 Philadelphia Trial, in *Ibid.*, 132; IV, 77.

38 *Cf.* these almost nominal fines with the imprisonment and even deportation of British unionists as related by Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, 69 *et seq.*

39 Philadelphia Trial in *Doc. Hist.*, III, 136, 138; Pittsburgh Trial, in *Ibid.*, IV, 17.

40 Philadelphia Trial in *Doc. Hist.*, III, 136.

41 Pittsburgh Trial, in *Ibid.*, IV, 85; Philadelphia Trial, in *Ibid.*, III, 230.

Jurors were also appealed to as consumers and were reminded that if the masters "pay higher wages," they "must pay higher for the articles." [42]

To these arguments the journeymen replied in part by *laissez-faire* economic reasoning. They maintained that an acquittal "will increase our commerce, encourage our manufactures, and promote the peace and prosperity of" their respective cities.[43] This state of affairs could only exist when labour is given full freedom in conducting its own concerns, otherwise it would drift to other parts and the community would suffer because of its scarcity, "for the principle is undeniable, that labour constitutes the real wealth of a country." [44] With this same argument they also met the contention that prices would decrease if journeymen were restrained in their efforts at combination.

"Temptations are held out to procure a conviction. . . . You are told that you will get your cossacks and slippers made cheaper by convicting the defendants. . . . Rest assured they will not fox a boot, or heel-tap a shoe, one farthing cheaper for a conviction. I will go further and say, they will not be able to do it. If you banish from this place (as it is morally certain you will), a great number of the best workmen, by a verdict of guilty, can you reasonably expect that labour will be cheaper? Will it not rise in value, in exact proportion to the scarcity of hands, and the demand for boots and shoes, like every other article in the market?" [45]

But labour's chief appeal was to liberty and democracy: "I would not barter away our dear bought rights and American liberty," said their Philadelphia advocate, "for all the warehouses of London and Liverpool, and the manufactures of Birmingham and Manchester; no; not if were to be added to them, the gold of Mexico, the silver of Peru, and the diamonds of Brazil." [46] He went on:

"It is of no importance what the inconvenience was to them [the masters], if the journeymen had the right to refuse. It is possible, if those masters had the right to compel the journeymen to work at their prices, they might not have incurred any loss. Mr. Bedford, instead of losing 4,000 dollars in 1799 . . . might

[42] *Ibid.*, 137.
[43] *Ibid.*, 206.
[44] *Ibid.*, 178.
[45] *Ibid.*, 198.
[46] *Ibid.*, 181.

have made an enormous profit: but would you therefore authorise him to compel men to work for him? I apprehend these things are not to be done for the convenience of . . . any . . . employer; the rights of the poor are not to be sacrificed to the wishes of the rich, nor should the privileges of the citizen be sacrificed to the benefit of Philadelphia, or the whole trade and commerce of the state." [47]

The prosecution also appealed to liberty and equality. The employers were entirely disinterested and had "no vindictive passions to gratify." They "merely stood as the guardians of the community from imposition and rapacity." They were upholding unrestrained freedom and were fighting for the "equal liberty" of all men, and against the oppression of the minority by the majority.[48] They were protecting the man who refused to join with the others in the strike:

"He was a stranger, he was a married man, with a large family; he represented his distressed condition; they entangle him, but shew no mercy. The dogs of vigilance find, by their scent, the emigrant in his cellar or garrett; they drag him forth, they tell him he must join them; he replies, I am well satisfied as I am. . . . No, they chase him from shop to shop; they allow him no resting place, till he consents to be one of their body; he is expelled [from] society, driven from his lodgings, proscribed from working; he is left no alternative, but to perish in the streets, or seek some other asylum on a more hospitable shore." [49]

On the whole the judges, especially in the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh cases, openly sided against the journeymen. The recorder in the Philadelphia case was unusually zealous in aiding the prosecution. He admonished the defence not to appeal to the passions of the jury but did not interfere with similar tactics of the prosecution.[50] He also took pains to condemn the action of the journeymen in his charge to the jury. "In every point of view," he declared, "this measure is pregnant with public mischief and private injury . . . tends to demoralise the workmen . . . destroy the trade of the city, and leaves the pockets of the whole community to the discretion of the concerned. If these evils were unprovided for by the law now

47 *Ibid.*, 154; Pittsburgh Trial, in *Ibid.*, IV, 62.

48 Philadelphia Trial, in *Ibid.*, III, 135, 137, 138, 139, 142.

49 *Ibid.*, 139; New York Trial, in *Ibid.*, 382.

50 *Ibid.*, 202 *et seq.*

existing, it would be necessary that laws should be made to restrain them." [51] It would seem, from a reading of the recorder's charge, that the editor of the *Aurora* exaggerated very little in describing his attitude. This editorial comment also illustrates the reaction of the journeymen sympathisers towards the spirit of the recorder. "A man who did not know the purposes for which the law contemplated the appointment of a *recorder* to preside in the mayor's court, would unquestionably have concluded that Mr. Recorder Levy had been paid by the master shoemakers for his discourse in the mayor's court on Friday last — never did we hear a charge to a jury delivered in a more prejudiced and partial manner — from such courts recorders and juries, good lord deliver us." [52]

51 *Ibid.*, 230, 231.

52 Philadelphia *Aurora*, Mar. 31, 1806

CHAPTER VI

SIGNS OF AWAKENING 1820–1827

Effects of Changed Conditions. Improved transportation facilities widen market area, 153. Ascendancy of merchant-capitalist, 154. Cheap methods of production, 154. Prison labour, 155. Workers resist encroachments on standard of life, 155. Unions of women and factory workers, 156. Strikes for higher wages, 156.

Demand for Shorter Hours. Discontent over "sunrise to sunset" system, 158. Boston House Carpenters' great ten-hour strike of 1825, 158. Journeymen contentions, 159. Masters denounce demands, 159. Capitalists side with masters, 160. Initial movement to reduce working time in bake shops, 162.

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EFFECT OF CHANGED CONDITIONS

Depression reached its lowest point in 1820. Thereafter conditions gradually improved,[1] giving rise to aggressive organisations of wage-earners in numerous industries. In this decade transportation facilities had improved so that commerce could be conducted on a much larger scale. Steamboat navigation had now proved itself practicable. In 1822 there were 108 steam-going vessels on the western waters.[2] Even prior to this date and as early as 1818 "in the harbor of New York steamboats were successfully employed in towing large and heavily laden ships into port, at the rate of four miles an hour."[3]

"The period of isolation and enforced self-sufficiency was at an end. Southern planters could ship their cotton and sugar from their river wharves to New Orleans or Mobile, where the season's crop was bought up by a factor and loaded to a sea going vessel for delivery at New York or Liverpool. . . .

1 Taussig, *Tariff History of the United States*, 74; Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States*, 378; Johnson, *History of Domestic and Foreign Commerce of the United States*, I, 217, 218; McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, V, 82.

2 Bishop, *History of American Manufactures*, II, 277.

3 *Ibid.*, 243.

Means of transportation were had in the vast system of lakes and rivers that brought the remotest sections of the great interior valley into communication with the sea. The Great Lakes were inland seas, while the Mississippi River and its tributaries furnished 16,674 miles of steamboat navigation. . . ." [4] Direct communication between the Atlantic States and the interior was still comparatively difficult and costly. However, freight rates steadily decreased after the Pennsylvania, New York, and Maryland turnpikes connecting the East and the West were completed.[5] The difficulty was, of course, entirely overcome towards the end of this period, when the Erie Canal was finished in 1825.[6]

These new transportation arteries, by uniting the East, West, and South commercially, opened the way for the merchant capitalist. Marketing could now be manipulated by specialists on a comprehensive scale. Agriculture was affected as well as industry. "The advent of the steamboat and the increase of population and capital in the West made it unnecessary for the farmers to act as their own merchants and transporting agents." [7] In industry, expansion of the market made the manufacturer dependent upon the merchant-capitalist. The early manufacturer generally lacked sufficient capital to finance the new markets. Consequently he was forced to rely upon the merchant-capitalist for funds with which to enlarge and keep his plant in constant operation. In return he contracted to dispose his products through the merchant-capitalist.[8] Indeed, he had no alternative. The home producer, as previously described, was far more dependent.

Competition from abroad, as well as amongst themselves, compelled the merchant-capitalists to seek cheaper methods of production. Besides playing producers against each other they sought other avenues of reducing cost of production. Access to all sections of the country strengthened their purpose. Hence, one feature which has characterised the merchant-capitalist system up to the present time begins to be complained of

4 Coman, *Industrial History of the United States*, 214; Johnson, *History of Domestic and Foreign Commerce of the United States*, I, 213–216.

5 *Ibid.*, 210, 216.

6 *Ibid.*, 220.

7 *Ibid.*, 214.

8 See Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States*, 367–370; see also above.

in the early twenties. In his search for cheap methods of production the merchant-capitalist at the outset fell upon the idea of using convict labour. Free labour felt the injury almost immediately. As early as 1823 the journeymen cabinetmakers of New York City assembled in mass meeting to discuss the threatened injury to their trade by the introduction of prison-made goods.[9] The small independent producer felt the pressure simultaneously with the wage-earner. This same year the mechanics of New York City petitioned the state legislature to abolish the competition of convict labour. Their grievances are summarised in the following passage from a lengthy memorial adopted at a public meeting: "Your memorialists have seen the convicts imperfectly educated in various trades, hired out to individuals, in some instances at reduced compensation, and in others employed for the benefit of the state, and the products of their labour thrown into market and disposed of at a price very little above the cost of materials of which they were manufactured, to the ruin of . . ." [10] free mechanics. They also proposed that convicts be employed in a state marble quarry.

These efforts to reduce the cost of production naturally led to encroachments upon the earnings of the workingmen. Stirred by the menace to their established standards of life, they began to awaken to the new danger. Prosperity and the consequent excessive demand for labour gave them their opportunity to protect their earning power. The employer-manufacturer, who formerly sided with labour,[11] being now dependent upon the merchant-capitalist, was obliged to yield to him and to oppose these attempts of the workingmen to maintain their accustomed standards. Therefore, in contrast to the previous period with its few sporadic strikes and only two trades permanently organised, we find many unorganised strikes and stable organisations in numerous trades, such as hatters, tailors, house and ship carpenters, house painters, stonecutters, weavers, nailers, and cabinetmakers. Besides indicating the awakening of labour, many of these organisations have the additional distinc-

9 Stewart, *Two Forgotten Decades in the History of Labor Organizations, 1820–1840*, in *American Federationist*, XX, 518.

10 New York *National Advocate*, Feb. 7, 1823.

11 *Pennsylvanian*, June 15, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 27–29.

tion of having participated in founding the early local central bodies which mark the beginning of the first labour movement in this country.

Other signs of awakening are the organisation of factory and women workers. Previous to this time only the handicraft workers were organised. They designated themselves journeymen societies or associations. The factory workers were the first to use the word "union" in the name of their organisation. Thus we find in New York in 1825 a Nailers' Union and a Weavers' Union joining with a number of journeymen societies in the celebration of the opening of the Erie Canal.[12]

The first instance of women participating in activities of labour organisations occurred in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, in 1824, when the "female weavers" struck with the men in an attempt to resist a reduction in wages and an increase in hours. It would seem that they held a separate meeting "and assembled in Parliament, to the number, as it is stated, of one hundred and two. . . ." Moreover, "the meeting was conducted, however strange it may appear, without noise, or scarcely a single speech."[13] This period also counts among its historic achievements the first strike in which women alone participated. This occurred in 1825, when "the Tailoresses of New York" struck for higher wages.[14]

It is because of such developments as permanent organisations in various trades, the organisation of factory and women workers, and the protest against convict labour that this chapter is entitled "Signs of Awakening." In this decade labour was forced to bestir itself, to throw off its dormancy, and to awaken to its new position as a propertyless wage-earning class. Conditions forced his immediate employer to cease being his ally, and to introduce methods of production that resulted in pulling down his standard of life. Hence, the worker, in self-defence, was compelled to fight his former comrade in industry.

Most of the strikes, as in the preceding period, centred around the question of wages. Some of them aimed to establish a uniform wage scale, lack of which proved as bothersome to "fair"

12 See *American Federationist*, XX, 518.

13 *The National Gazette*, June 3 and 10, 1824; Providence (R. I.) *Patriot*, May 29 and June 5, 1824.

14 *Ibid.*, Apr. 23, 1825.

employers as to the workers themselves. In 1823 the New York City stonecutters struck for a uniform wage scale of $1.62½ a day.[15] There was also a strike for higher wages in this trade in 1825.[16] Similarly, the Journeymen Hatters of the City of Philadelphia "turned out," in 1825, "to establish a regular system of wages, to prevent one employer from underselling another."[17] Other strikes were called to resist reductions in wages. The New York Hatters organised in 1823 to resist an attempt of the employers' association to reduce wages,[18] while the Pawtucket mill workers also "turned out" to fight a reduction in wages and an increase in hours.

Beginning with 1824 and running through 1825, the year which saw the culmination of a period of high prices, a number of strikes occurred in the important industrial centres. The majority were called to enforce higher wages. In 1824, the Buffalo Tailors,[19] Philadelphia Ship Carpenters,[20] the New York Journeymen House Painters,[21] and others struck for increases in wages. In 1825 there were strikes of tailors, stonecutters, riggers, stevedores, and common labourers in New York City; hand loom weavers in Philadelphia; and cabinetmakers in Baltimore and Philadelphia. The New York tailors are said to have asked "for what is equivalent to about $3 advance a week on previous wages."[22] The stonecutters won their strike for $2 a day; the riggers asked $1.50 and the stevedores and common labourers $1.25 per day;[23] in Philadelphia 2,900 weavers out of about 4,500 in the city went on strike early in April for higher wages;[24] the Baltimore cabinetmakers in May asked for an increase of 25 per cent on existing prices;[25] and a month later the Philadelphia cabinetmakers presented the same demand.[26]

15 *American Federationist*, XX, 518.
16 Charleston City *Gazette*, Mar. 30, 1825.
17 Providence *Patriot*, Jan. 3, 1825.
18 People *v.* Trequier, reported in I Wheeler's *Criminal Cases*, 142.
19 *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 93–95.
20 Providence *Patriot*, June 26, 1824.
21 New York *Evening Post*, Apr. 24, 1824.
22 *Freeman's Journal*, Apr. 11, 1825.
23 Charleston City *Gazette*, Mar. 30, 1825; New York *Evening Post*, May 22, 1825.
24 *Freeman's Journal*, Apr. 28, 1825.
25 *Ibid.*, May 19, 1825.
26 *Ibid.*, June 27, 1825.

DEMAND FOR SHORTER HOURS

The question of hours also received attention from some of the workingmen. The old custom that the hours of labour should range from "sunrise to sunset" still prevailed. That this system was becoming unbearable is shown by the attempt of some trades to secure reforms. "In 1822 . . . the journeymen millwrights and machine workers of Philadelphia . . . met at a tavern, and passed resolutions that ten hours of labor were enough for one day, and that work ought to begin at 6 A. M. and end at 6 P. M., with an hour for breakfast and one for dinner." [27] As far as it is known these workers made no effort to enforce their resolution.

The Boston House Carpenters, however, were not content with merely adopting resolutions. They forced the issue. The refusal of the master builders to grant their demands in 1825 precipitated the first great strike in which the ten-hour day was the paramount contention. Close to 600 journeymen carpenters were involved in this struggle.

Two additional features make this one of the most notable strikes in American labour history. As a result of the strike we have a presentation of the arguments for and against a ten-hour day that became quite common in the ten-hour movement of the following period. In this connection we also get an admirable illustration of the separation and alignment of economic interests in the merchant-capitalist stage. The merchant-capitalist, who supplies the raw material, finances the production expense, and markets the finished product, is represented in the owners of vacant lots and builders. The manufacturer-employer, entirely dependent upon the merchant-capitalist, appears in the person of the contractor or master builder. The journeyman stands out as the propertyless wage-earner with interests antagonistic to the others.

The journeymen chose the most strategic time for their strike. They called it in the spring of the year when there was a great demand for carpenters, owing to "the recent calamitous fire" and "the great public improvements." [28] "Believing

27 McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, V, 84.
28 Columbian *Centinel*, Apr. 27, 1825.

the existing wages derogatory to the principles not only of justice but humanity," they resolved "that ten hours faithful labour shall hereafter constitute a day's work, this being in perfect accordance with the modes adopted in our other sister cities in the United States.[29] not by any means taking from any one the right of exercising his own judgment in working a longer time per day for a proportional equivalent, in order to accommodate either himself or his employer." [30]

They also complained that "on the present system, it is impossible for a Journeyman Housewright and House Carpenter to maintain a family at the present time, with the wages which are now usually given to the Journeymen House Carpenters in this city." [31] The insufficient wage argument was evidently an afterthought, intended to influence the "House Carpenters and Housewrights in the Country," for it is addressed to them in order to counteract an advertisement of the masters. The original statement issued by the carpenters did not mention the matter of wages. Similarly, the proclamations published by the masters, as well as the "gentlemen engaged in building," completely ignored the question of wages. From the beginning they centred their attack on the pernicious nature of the demand for a ten-hour day.

The resolutions of the master carpenters and of the capitalists who engaged them aptly illustrate the spirit of the times towards any demand for shorter hours. "We learn with surprise and regret," read the masters' declaration, "that a large number of those who are employed as Journeymen in this city, have entered into a combination for the purpose of altering the time of commencing and terminating their daily labour, from that which has been customary from time immemorial." They considered such a combination "fraught with numerous and pernicious evils," especially to the journeymen themselves, as they might expect soon to become masters and were entailing upon themselves "inconveniences" when they should have attained that situation. They furthermore considered that the measure proposed would have an "unhappy influence" on ap-

29 This statement is very likely an exaggeration, for only New York City had a ten-hour work-day during this period. See above.

30 Columbian *Centinel*, Apr. 20, 1825.

31 *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 78.

prentices "by seducing them from that course of industry and economy of time" to which they were anxious to "enure them," and would expose the journeymen themselves "to many temptations and improvident practices" from which they were "happily secure" when working from sunrise to sunset. "We fear and dread the consequences," they said, "of such a measure, upon the morals and well being of society." [32] Finally, they declared that they could not believe "this project to have originated with any of the faithful and industrious Sons of New England, but are compelled to consider it an evil of foreign growth, and one which we hope and trust will not take root in the favoured soil of Massachusetts." "And especially," they added, "that our city, the early rising and industry of whose inhabitants are universally proverbial, may not be infected with the unnatural production." [33]

Back of this sweeping condemnation of the short-hour movement on moral and traditional grounds stood the economic argument, that "if such a measure . . . would ever be just, it cannot be at a time like the present, when builders have generally made their engagements and contracts for the season, having predicated their estimates and prices upon the original state of things in reference to Journeymen." They therefore resolved to "make no alteration in the manner of employing Journeymen, as respects the time of commencing and leaving work, and that we will employ no man who persists in adhering to the project of which we complain." [34]

But it was probably the action of the capitalists, rather than that of the master carpenters, which defeated the strike. The journeymen were employed directly by the master carpenters, or master builders, as they were sometimes called. The masters, however, were in their turn employed by the prospective owners, who financed the operations and supplied the material necessary in erecting the buildings. A few days following the meeting of the master carpenters, the "gentlemen engaged in building the present season" convened, and resolved that the proceedings of the journeymen were "a departure from the salutary and steady usages which have prevailed in this city, and all New England, from time immemorial." "If this con-

[32] *Ibid.*, 76, 77. [33] *Ibid.*, 77. [34] *Ibid.*

federacy," they added, in appealing to fellow-employers, "should be countenanced by the community, it must, of consequence, extend to and embrace all the Working Classes in every department in Town and Country, thereby effecting a most injurious change in all modes of business, and in the operations of agriculture and commerce, opening a wide door for idleness and vice, and finally commuting the present condition of the Mechanical Classes, made happy and prosperous by frugal, orderly, temperate and ancient habits, for that degraded state, by which in other countries, many of these classes are obliged to leave their homes, bringing with them their feelings and habits, and a spirit of discontent and insubordination to which our native Mechanics have hitherto been strangers." They then directed their appeal to the public at large by declaring that "all combinations by any Classes of Citizens intended to regulate or effect the value of labour by abridging its duration, are in a high degree unjust or injurious to all other classes, inasmuch as they give an artificial and unnatural turn to business, and tend to convert all its branches into Monopolies." [35]

The "gentlemen engaged in building" also expressed the highest approval of the "firmness, temperance and intelligence manifested by the Master Carpenters in their proceedings"; and resolved to support them "at whatever sacrifice or inconvenience, and to this end extend the time for the fulfilment of their contracts, and even to suspend, if necessary, building altogether." They could foresee, they said, "no loss or inconvenience arising from such suspensions, equal to what must result from permitting such combinations to be effectual." They appealed to the journeymen "to retrace their steps and return to their business, and to realise by their industry and perseverance in the good old way, the fair advantages, which are now promised by full employment and good wages to all who will embrace them." After the significant expression of confidence that "all who think themselves worthy of becoming Masters, will perceive their true interest in conforming to their advice," they declared that "if contrary to expectation they should persevere in the present determination, we hereby agree and pledge ourselves to each other, not to employ any such

[35] *Ibid.*, 79–81.

Journeymen, or any other Master Carpenter who shall yield to their pretensions." A committee was appointed to present these resolutions "to the Building Committee of Faneuil Hall market for their concurrence," and fifty copies were ordered printed to be deposited "in convenient public places for the signature of such citizens as may approve them." [36]

Closely related to the ten-hour demand, and another significant sign of labour's awakening, was the move on the part of the bakers to reduce the weekly working time. The germ of this movement was also formed in this decade. The New York City bakers led their fellow-craftsmen in creating sentiment in favour of the abolition of Sunday work. They took the initiative by calling a mass meeting in 1821, at which the subject of abolishing Sunday labour in their trade was first publicly discussed.[37]

CONSPIRACY CASES

Just as prosperity brought forth a new crop of unions, so their assertiveness gave rise to several conspiracy cases. Since labour was now organised in many trades, the prosecutions of which we have record were no longer confined to a particular industry. Out of the four cases during this period, only one involved shoemakers. Two of the others were against journeymen tailors, and the fourth was a hatters' case. In this period we also find the first recorded conspiracy case in this country instituted against masters, who were unsuccessfully prosecuted for conspiring to reduce wages.[38]

The distinguishing feature of these cases, however, is that two of them deviate from the old ones and tend more to resemble present-day conspiracy cases. Indeed, one of them clearly approaches the form and content of modern cases. In the other the issue was presented that a combination to raise wages is unlawful in itself, but the judge promptly ruled it out as not being good law in this country.[39] From a practical standpoint, the journeymen gained little in this change of emphasis. While it was now legal for them to combine to raise

36 *Ibid.*
37 *American Federationist*, XX, 518.
38 Commonwealth *v.* Carlisle (1821), Brightley's *Nisi Prius Cases*, 36.
39 Journeymen Tailors Trial, in *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 261–263.

wages, the methods which they used to strengthen and maintain their organisation so as to be able to obtain better wages were put into question. Vital trade union tactics like picketing, sympathetic strike, closed shop, and distribution of scab lists were outlawed by the courts. Hence, although it was lawful to combine to raise wages, it was still unlawful for journeymen, in attempting to make their demands effective, to combine to use the means above enumerated. These acts were regarded by the courts as intimidation and coercion of other parties with intent to injure.

Commonwealth *v.* Carlisle, 1821, the first case of this period, hardly differs in point of law from the Pittsburgh 1815 case. The prosecution was directed against Master Ladies' Shoemakers for conspiring to reduce wages. Chief-Justice Gibson, of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, declared the law to be as follows: "It will, therefore, be perceived that the motive for combining, or what is the same thing, the nature of the object to be attained as a consequence of the lawful act is, in this class of cases, the discriminative circumstance. Where the act is lawful for an individual it can be the subject for a conspiracy, when done in concert only where there is a direct intention that injury shall result from it, or where the object is to benefit the conspirators to the prejudice of the public or the oppression of individuals, and where such prejudice and oppression is the natural and necessary consequence." On the basis of this theory the court held that it was lawful for the masters, who were forced by employés to raise wages to combine in order to restore them to their "natural level." Otherwise, had the employers combined to depress wages of journeymen below what they would be if there were no recurrence to artificial means by either side "it would have been criminal."

Commonwealth *v.* Carlisle is significant only in this, that it enabled the recorder in the succeeding Pennsylvania case to discard the proposition that a combination to raise wages is illegal and to place the case squarely upon the plea of coercion and intimidation, especially as it affects third parties.[40] This indictment resulted from a strike in 1827 by Philadelphia journeymen tailors to secure reinstatement of six members,

[40] *Ibid.*

discharged for demanding a higher piece rate than the employers offered on certain work.[41] The shop was picketed, strike-breakers were accosted and urged to discontinue work during the trouble, other masters were visited, and some were persuaded not to do work for the struck concern. There was also some semblance of violence on both sides. The indictment and counts followed the usual form, and counsel for the defence tried, at least indirectly, to make capital of the theory that a combination to raise wages is illegal. In his charge to the jury the recorder deliberately ruled out the latter proposition as being bad law in this country, and directed their attention to the question of intimidation and coercion. "It must have become obvious to you, gentlemen, that it is my wish to direct your attention to the sole inquiry, how far the combination charged and the overt acts are calculated to affect the rights of innocent third persons. This is all the case requires. It is unnecessary to go out of our way to examine the question as to the right to combine to raise wages; which has never been decided on in the United States, and for this I have the authority of the present Chief Justice of the state." [42] The jury found the journeymen guilty, but, of course, it is not clear on what theory they acted. It is quite probable that they guided themselves by the law as laid down by the recorder.[43]

The New York Hatters' case of 1823 [44] is the first one that differs completely from the old conspiracy cases. The indictment and counts would hold at present in most jurisdictions. The idea that a combination to raise wages is illegal is entirely omitted, and the issue turns squarely on the question of conspiring to injure others. On this phase the hatters were adjudged guilty for combining to deprive a non-union workman of his livelihood. Here we have for the first time the issue fought out, as in modern cases, solely on the basis of conspiring to injure a third person by coercion and intimidation.

It is not certain upon what issues the Buffalo Tailors' case of 1824 turned.[45] Unfortunately the court record could not be located. The only evidence available is a meagre contemporary

41 *Ibid.*, 99 *et seq.*
42 *Ibid.*, 261.
43 *Ibid.*, 264.
44 People *v.* Trequier, reported in I Wheeler's *Criminal Cases*, 142.
45 Buffalo Tailors' Trial, in *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 93.

newspaper account from which it is known that the workingmen were found guilty. It would seem that the indictment and counts were similar to those contained in the early conspiracy cases. It would also seem that "a singular custom among the Jours. to coerce the refractory was proved to exist throughout the United States, by which the person who should refuse to come into the measures of the majority, or who subsequently to a turn-out should, before an arrangement was had, labour at the same place for less than the wages demanded, was stigmatised by an appropriate name, and rendered too infamous to be allowed to labour in any shop where his conduct should be known and in case of such offenders, means were generally taken by the *flints* to give general information of the fact." [46]

[46] *Ibid.*, 94.

PART TWO

CITIZENSHIP (1827–1833)

By HELEN L. SUMNER

CHAPTER I

CAUSES OF THE AWAKENING

Economic and Political Inequality. Industrial depression of 1829, 170. Lack of leisure, 171. Women and children in factories, 172. Public approval of long hours, 174. Political power through extension of franchise, 175. Growth of cities, 176. Lack of true democracy, 177. Imprisonment for debt, 177. Militia system, 180. Monopolies and the banking system, 180. State of public education, 181. Education of children employed in factories, 182. A wage-earners' movement, 184.

The first awakening of American wage-earners to their interests as a class did not occur until the late twenties. Before that time the spirit of discontent had broken out occasionally in isolated, sporadic "turn-outs," but the different trades had not learned the advantages of mutual aid, nor had they striven to keep up permanent organisations for aggressive purposes. The first co-ordinated movement of several trades in the United States occurred in Philadelphia in 1827 when, as a result of a strike of building trades workmen for a ten-hour day, there was formed the first effective city central organisation of wage-earners in the world [1]— the Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations. This in turn gave birth to the first labour party in the world — the Working Men's party, which led to the first industrial union, at least in this country,— the New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics, and other Workingmen. For several years this movement was not only the expression of labour's unrest but was also an important political force with which the old established parties were obliged to reckon and to which, as will be seen, they were obliged to make concessions.

The cause of the awakening was economic and political inequality between citizens of different classes, not primarily between employers and wage-earners, but between "producers"

1 A union of trades had been formed in Manchester, England, a year earlier, but it "expired before it was so much as known to a large majority of the operatives in the neighbourhood." Webb, *History of Trade Unionism* (2d edition), 107.

and "consumers." Around two chief grievances, both closely related to their status as citizens of a democracy, the workingmen of this period rallied. First was the demand for leisure, which furnished the keynote of the economic movement. Work from "sun to sun" was held to be incompatible with citizenship, for it did not afford the workman the requisite leisure for the consideration of public questions and therefore condemned him to an inferior position in the state. Second was the demand for public education, which furnished the keynote of the political movement. Charity schools were held to be incompatible with citizenship, for they degraded the children of the workingmen, and failed to furnish them with the requisite training and information for the consideration of public questions, thereby dooming them to become the dupes of political demagogues.

In the economic field, the extension of markets, based upon the turnpike and the canal, and resulting in the rapid development of machine industry and the factory system, of wholesale production and of wholesale trade, led both to economic expansion and to economic pressure. By 1825 the country had practically recovered from the panic of 1819, but soon afterwards there began another period of falling prices and industrial depression. The intense suffering of the poor and the pressing demand for charity during the winter of 1828–1829 were long remembered by those who were personally familiar with conditions in the larger cities of the country at that time. Horace Greeley's earliest recollections of New York were of the misery which prevailed during that winter, and his whole life was tinged by the sympathy and the longing to better conditions which were first drawn out by this experience.[2] In January, 1829, the New York *Commercial Advertiser* issued an appeal to the benevolent of the city to bestir themselves, in view of the fact that the supply of wood and provisions laid in by the commissioners of the almshouse for distribution was exhausted. "It makes the heart bleed," said the editor, "to look at the hundreds and thousands of shivering, hungry applicants for charity, who have thronged the old alms house in the Park this forenoon, pleading their cause in the most woeful and

2 Greeley, *Recollections of a Busy Life*, 87.

supplicating terms. . . . There is unquestionably more intense suffering at this moment, than there has been for many previous years, if ever." [3] A little later soup kitchens were opened for the relief of the poor. "Thousands of industrious mechanics," according to a correspondent of the New York *Times*, "who never before solicited alms, were brought to the humiliating condition of applying for assistance, and with tears on their manly cheeks, confessed their inability to provide food or clothing for their families." [4]

Not only was there at times a great deal of unemployment, but the unskilled at least suffered constantly from low wages and long hours. Taking into consideration both hours and cost of living, a workingman in 1830 even denied that mechanics were better off in this country than in Europe. "In this free country (as they call it)," he argued, "my income, when I can get work, is $7.50 per six days — my board costs me together with the washing $2.87 per week, leaving me the small sum of $4.63 which is worth almost ¾ as much to purchase my clothing in America as what would purchase, of the same quality and quantity in Europe; and not only that, my income in Europe is 24s. per six days, commencing at 6 o'clock A. M., leaving off work at 6 P. M., and subtracting from that 2 hours for meal time, which makes the time of toiling 10 hours each day, and my board and washing is 5s. 6d. per week; leaving the $4.63 income that I get in America; besides, the time of toiling in Philadelphia, is from 5 o'clock in the morning until half past seven in the evening, meal time two hours, leaving twelve and a half hours for toiling, which is one day and a half more for toiling in America than what is required in Europe." [5]

The most frequent cause of complaint among working people was the lack of leisure. The hours required as a day's work were exceedingly long. The system of labour from "sun to sun" had been taken over from agriculture, where conditions were entirely different, and even outdoor mechanics worked in many places from sunrise to sunset at all seasons. In winter

[3] New York *Commercial Advertiser*; quoted in the *Free Enquirer*, Jan. 11, 1829, 158, 159.

[4] Carey's *Select Excerpta*, XIV, 75.

[5] *Mechanics' Free Press*, Aug. 21, 1830.

this meant comparatively short hours; but, as wages were paid by the day regardless of the season, every inducement existed to concentrate all the work possible into the late spring, the summer, and the early fall, when the days were long and the men could be required to work from twelve to fifteen hours. As a result, not only was there great physical strain during the summer months, but during the short winter days hundreds of building trades mechanics were unemployed.

In the manufacturing districts the hours of labour were particularly long.[6] An estimate of the time worked in factories, which may be considered to represent conditions throughout this period, was made in 1839 by James Montgomery, superintendent of the York Factories at Saco, Maine.[7] According to his account, the day's work at Lowell varied from 11 hours and 24 minutes in December and January, to 13 hours and 31 minutes in April, the average for the year being 12 hours and 13 minutes per day, or about 73½ hours per week. In many, and perhaps the majority, of the Middle and Southern States, he said, the average was even higher, being about 13¾ hours per day, or 82½ hours per week in summer, and about 75½ hours per week throughout the year. It should be added that these were the hours during which the factories were run, and that not all the operatives were obliged to work throughout the entire time. But overtime was frequent in the busy seasons.

Protests against the hours of labour in factories were made primarily by "farmers, mechanics and workingmen" and not by factory operatives, a large proportion of whom were women and children. The Lowell type of factories, which followed the plan originally worked out at Waltham, used throstle spindles and employed women both as spinners and as weavers. The women were all housed in company boarding-houses, and few children were employed. The Fall River type, on the other hand, used mule spindles and employed men spinners, so that the labour force was supplied by families who lived in

6 A Philadelphia manufacturer, writing in defence of the hours required in factories, said: "Is there any tyranny in working from 5 A. M. till 6 P. M.? That is only one hour longer than the Mechanic toils; and yet the operative is paid 33⅓ per cent better than he is." *Ibid.*, Aug. 8, 1829.

7 Montgomery, *Practical Detail of the Cotton Manufacture of the United States*, 173, 174.

tenements rented from the company. Under this plan a large number of little children were employed and their support came in part from their own wages and in part from the wages of their parents.[8] The Lowell factory and boarding-house system, which was in certain respects an imitation of Robert Owen's establishment at New Lanark, Scotland, and which was considered the model welfare work of the time, was in use in all the factories in the vicinity of Lowell in Massachusetts and in New Hampshire. The Fall River system was in use throughout Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland.

In the cotton textile industry as a whole the proportion of women and children, owing in part to the scarcity of adult male labour, in part to the character of machinery in use, and in part to the lack of legislation regulating woman and child labour, was much higher than to-day. In 1831, in the six New England States and in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, 58.1 per cent. of all the employés, including hand weavers, in cotton mills, were women and 7 per cent. were children under twelve years of age.[9] In Lowell in 1833 the factories are said to have employed only 1,200 males and 3,800 females,[10] and in 1834, 4,500 females out of a total of 6,000 employés;[11] while in Paterson, New Jersey, where the Fall River system was in force, the proportion in 1830 was 2,000 males to 3,000 females,[12] and in 1835 it was said that out of 1,900 to 2,000 factory operatives, not including hand weavers, about 600, or nearly one-third, were under sixteen years of age.[13] Even in New England in 1832 a committee of the New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics, and Other Working Men estimated that two-fifths of the whole number of persons employed in all the factories were children under sixteen years of age.[14] And in some States

8 Sumner, *History of Women in Industry in the United States, Senate Document*, 61 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 645, Vol. IX, 53.

9 These percentages are based upon the supposition that all hand-weavers were men. The figures are given by the Convention of the Friends of Domestic Industry, *Report on the Production and Manufacture of Cotton*, 1832, 16.

10 Boston *Courier*, June 27, 1833, quoted from the Lowell *Journal*.

11 Boston *Transcript*, May 27, 1834, quoted from Bunker Hill *Aurora*.

12 Trumbull, *History of Industrial Paterson*, 52.

13 *National Trades' Union*, Aug. 15, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 63, 64.

14 *Free Enquirer*, June 14, 1832; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 195.

it was said that, as in England, apprentices were taken from the poorhouses to work in factories.[15]

Women were merely following their home industries to the factory. But they were there encountering new conditions of labour, the effect of which upon their minds, their morals, and their health was yet to be measured. At Lowell and the other towns where the factory boarding-house system had been adopted, the girls were New England farmers' daughters, most of whom had received a fair education in country schools. At first considerable difficulty was experienced in obtaining the requisite labour supply and the boarding-house system, with its careful regulations designed to safeguard the morals of the girls, was probably adopted by the companies in order to allay the fears of fathers, aroused by current descriptions of English factory districts and factory operatives. In Fall River and Rhode Island, on the other hand, a large proportion of the factory operatives were English. As early as 1832 Seth Luther, the first active advocate of factory legislation in this country, accused manufacturers of sending "agents to *Europe*, to induce *foreigners* to come here, to underwork *American* citizens, to support *American* industry, and the *American* system." [16]

For all classes of labourers — men, women, and children — public opinion approved the "sun to sun" system of labour. Among all classes long hours were the rule, leisure was little appreciated, and health was sacrificed to habits of industry. The stern New England spirit, indeed, had invested "industrious habits"— the habit of working continuously from morn till night with only time for meals — with the sacred character of a moral, if not a religious, precept. And this sturdy pioneer spirit saw no reason whatever why an employer should not require of a wage-earner the same hours that the farmer expected to give to his fields, the shopkeeper to his trade, or the housewife to her domestic tasks. As for child labourers, manufacturers as well as master carpenters believed that a ten-hour day would have an "unhappy influence" on them "by reducing

[15] *Banner of the Constitution*, Dec. 19, 1829.

[16] Luther, *Address to the Working-Men of New-England* (1st ed.), 16.

them from that course of industry and economy of time" to which their employers were anxious to "enure them." [17]

When wage-earners, therefore, first attempted to shorten hours of labour they ran counter to public opinion as well as to the interests of their employers. The opposition to the ten-hour movement, which was the first effort to regulate hours, appears, indeed, to have been much more formidable than any opposition ever presented to the eight-hour movement.

The decreasing bargaining power of mechanics, resulting from the revolution in the means of marketing the product, coupled with the horrors of the depression, was doubtless sufficient to account for a labour movement. Yet, though the movement during the twenties derived its main motive power from economic conditions, it was shaped principally by the political and social conditions of the time. This was the flowering period of several great political reforms now accepted far and wide, and the germinating period of most of the problems which to-day occupy the attention of the working classes and of social reformers. Following a brief economic struggle for the ten-hour day, the movement therefore made its real start in the political field where, for the first time in history, labour struggled for political power at the polls.

Nor is it surprising that it was through politics that the wage-earning class, as such, attempted to register its first protest. True, it had been the marketing revolution, with the resulting stratification of merchant-capitalists, master workmen, and journeymen, that had caused the latter to feel as a class by themselves; yet many influences seem to have conspired to throw the struggle at once into the political field.

The victory of Republicanism over Federalism in 1800 had been substantially a victory of the agricultural interest, supported by an incipient city democracy, against the mercantile and moneyed aristocracy.[18] The farmer and planter accordingly looked with favour upon the extension of the franchise to the mechanic and journeyman. But so overwhelming had

17 Resolutions of Master Carpenters of Boston at time of strike for a ten-hour day, in *Columbian Centinel* (Boston), Apr. 20, 1825; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 76, 77. See above, I, 158.

18 See Beard, *Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy*.

been the victory over Federalism that the enfranchisement of the non-propertied class did not become a matter of immediate political urgency; and, roughly speaking, another quarter of a century was allowed to elapse before the workingmen obtained the vote. Of the industrial States of this period, Massachusetts granted him the suffrage in 1820, and New York in 1822,[19] while in Pennsylvania the constitution of 1790 had already extended the right of suffrage to all those who paid any kind of state or county tax.[20]

Meanwhile, the awakening of labour to a feeling of class solidarity was made possible by the growth of cities. From 1810 to 1820 but 2 cities of 8,000 inhabitants or over were added to the 11 already in existence. In the following decade, however, from 1820 to 1830, 13 were added, bringing the number up to 26, and in the decade from 1830 to 1840, 18 more were added, bringing the number up to 44. The proportion of urban to rural population also changed materially between 1820 and 1840. In 1820, 4.9 per cent of the total population lived in cities of 8,000 or over; in 1830, 6.7 per cent; and in 1840, 8.5 per cent.[21] More significant, however, is the growth during these years of the cities that already had become prominent. New York,[22] which had a population of 123,706 in 1820, had 202,589 in 1830 and 312,710 in 1840. Philadelphia, which had a population of 63,802 in 1820, had 80,462 in 1830, and 93,665 in 1840.[23] Boston, which had 43,298 inhabitants in 1820, had 61,392 in 1830 and 93,383 in 1840; Baltimore, which had 62,738 in 1820, had 80,620 in 1830, and 102,313 in 1840. The most rapid growth, however, was naturally in the western cities. Pittsburgh grew from a population of 7,248 in 1820 to 15,369 in 1830 and to 31,204 in 1840; Cincinnati from 9,642 in 1820, to 24,831 in 1830 and

19 See McMaster, *The Acquisition of Political, Social and Industrial Rights of Man in America.*

20 Thorpe, *The Federal and State Constitutions*, V, 3096.

21 *U. S. Census*, 1910, *Population*, I, Table 33, p. 54. In 1910 778 cities had a population of 8,000 or over.

22 Manhattan borough.

23 Philadelphia was of considerably greater importance than is indicated by these figures, by reason of its large manufacturing suburbs, such as the Northern Liberties, Kensington, Spring Garden, and Southwark, which are now included in the city. In 1820 the total population of these suburbs alone was 45,007, which added to the population of the city of Philadelphia in this year amounted to 108,745. In 1830 they together totaled 108,335, and in 1840, 205,850. *Ibid.*, 1820, 1830, and 1840.

to 46,338 in 1840; and Louisville from 4,012 in 1820, to 10,341 in 1830 and to 21,210 in 1840.[24]

No sooner was the workingman given the vote than it became possible for political parties to use him to their own advantage. The "era of good feeling" came to an end soon after Monroe's second election in 1824, and the old bitter struggle was resumed between the "democracy" and the "aristocracy." In this struggle the enfranchised workingman became a valuable ally to the side that could win him over.

At the same time the conviction was dawning upon the workingmen, who accepted the Declaration of Independence as their gospel, that the equality thus far attained was only equality before the ballot-box, not equality before the conditions of life, or even equality before the law. In fact it appeared to them that true democracy had been cheated of any real, substantial victory, because the abstract ideal of equality had failed to be transformed into concrete reality. The right to citizenship had been generally acknowledged. But the rights of citizens, which the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were supposed to have guaranteed, they found still to be, like the pot of gold, at the end of the rainbow.

Evils, indeed, which might make the newly enfranchised wage-earner feel degraded in his own eyes as a full-fledged citizen of the State, were not lacking. Some of these were laws or judicial practices which bore unequally upon the rich and the poor. Such were imprisonment for debt, from which, in the nature of things, the poor were the greatest sufferers; the treatment of combinations to raise wages as illegal conspiracies; the compulsory militia system which penalised the rich for non-attendance with a fine, and the poor with imprisonment; and the banking system, which offered the workingman none of the advantages of credit but instead, frequently caused him to be paid his wages in bank notes of which he could not possibly tell the real value. In general, the workingmen of this period were ardent champions of all reforms, from temperance and the abolition of prison labour, lotteries, and capital punishment, to the reform of taxation and a simpler and less expensive sys-

[24] *Ibid.*, 1910, *Population*, I. Table 56, p. 80.

tem of legal procedure, and many of these measures found their first friends in this labour movement.

Other causes of complaint went back to the failure of the State to step in on behalf of the poor citizen in order to secure his right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" on a par with his rich fellow-citizens. To this category belonged the failure to shorten by legislative action the excessively long working day, or to regulate the labour of children in factories, the failure to protect wages by a mechanics' lien law and, most important of all, the defective system of education which condemned the children of the poor to schools maintained by charity.

Of great and constant offence to the newly enfranchised citizen was the practice of imprisonment for debt. In 1829 the Boston Prison Discipline Society [25] estimated that about 75,000 persons were annually imprisoned for debt in the United States. Many of these debts were very small. Out of 37 cases in one Massachusetts prison, for example, 20 were for less than $20, and out of 40 cases in another prison, 22 were for less than $20. In 18 of these cases, in which the total amount of debts was $155.68, the loss of time was 236 days which, at 75 cents per day, would have more than paid the sums due. In 9 other cases, in which the whole amount was $66.61, the total loss of time was 214 days which, at 32 cents per day, would have paid the debts. The average amount of costs in all of these instances, was more than half the average amount of debts, while the method used was conclusively shown to have been almost fruitless as a means of collection. In more than one half of the 75,000 cases of imprisonment in the whole United States, according to this report, the sums were less than $20, the costs were more than half the original debts, and the time lost in prison, sometimes at 30 and sometimes at 60 cents per day, would have paid the debts. The amount paid was stated to have been "sometimes one dollar to eighty-five, and in other cases not one to one hundred and forty; while about one-third part are discharged in Massachusetts, because they have nothing to pay, and another third because their board is not paid by the creditor, as the law

[25] Prison Discipline Society, *Fourth Annual Report*, 1829, pp. 16–18.

requires." In 1830 [26] the Prison Discipline Society estimated, upon the basis of returns received from nearly a hundred prisons in different parts of the United States, that the number of persons annually imprisoned for debt was, "in Massachusetts, 3,000; in New York, 10,000; in Pennsylvania, 7,000; in Maryland, 3,000; and in the other Northern and Middle States, nearly as above in proportion to the population." Though the Massachusetts law forbade imprisonment for debts under $5 and required the creditor to pay the board of the debtor, a writer in the Boston *Practical Politician* stated that in that city during the past year 1,400 persons, including nearly 100 females, had been imprisoned for debt.[27] A report by the citizens of Rochester, New York, shortly before this time, showed that in Monroe County during a single year about one person for every ten families had been imprisoned for debt.[28] One of these cases was for a debt of 25 cents.

All classes of people were imprisoned, but the burden of the law naturally fell most heavily upon the poor, upon the working classes, and especially upon the unemployed. Many pitiful cases were cited by the press of the day. For example, the newspapers reported that in Boston a blind man, with a family dependent upon him, was imprisoned for a debt of $6; [29] that in Providence, Rhode Island, a widow was imprisoned for a debt of 68 cents by the man to save whose property from fire her husband had lost his life,[30] and that in Salem, Massachusetts, a man seventy-six years old, who had been wounded at the Battle of Bunker Hill, was imprisoned for a "debt of a few dollars." [31] Many other similar instances of the working of the system might be given.

In many places the jails were overcrowded and in terribly insanitary condition, and in some States no provision was made for supplying even food to imprisoned debtors. In New Bedford, Massachusetts, 16 debtors were said to have been at one time confined in a room less than 20 feet square.[32] In New

26 *Ibid.*, *Fifth Annual Report*, 1830, p. 38.

27 Quoted in *Delaware Free Press*, Dec. 25, 1830.

28 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Mar. 27, 1830.

29 Carey's *Select Excerpta*, XXXIII, 363.

30 *Delaware Free Press*, July 31, 1830; quoted from the *Rochester Examiner*.

31 Boston *Courier*, Oct. 28, 1831; quoted from the Essex *Register*.

32 Utica *Mechanics' Press*, July 17, 1830; quoted from the New Bedford *Mercury*.

York from January, 1826, to November, 1827, 1,972 persons were reported to have been imprisoned in the debtors' jail, in some instances for debts of $2 or $3, "without either fuel, food or bed, except a quart of soup each twenty-four hours." [33] And in New Jersey, where "food, bedding and fuel" were provided for criminals, but only "walls, bars, and bolts" for debtors, when a member of the legislature attempted to go among the prisoners, he found the air in such a state that he was obliged to retreat.[34]

The militia system then in force, like imprisonment for debt, was a burden which fell with greater weight upon the poor man than upon the rich, upon workingmen than upon the employer, and which was, therefore, decidedly resented by the former. This system provided for periodical drills and parades, lasting usually three days, at which all citizens of military age were expected to appear, provided at their own expense with arms and other equipment. For failure to appear the penalty was a fine or, if the fine could not be paid, imprisonment. As a result, men who could afford to do so generally paid their fines rather than attend these drills, and thus the system degenerated into imprisonment or compulsory service, with its loss of time and wages, for the poor man, and exemption on payment of a fine for those to whom the fine was no great burden. In New York, where the fine for non-attendance was $12, it was figured out that, in time alone, the poor man lost by militia duty $^3/_{313}$ of his annual income, while the man who lived on the interest of $100,000, by paying the $12 fine, would lose only $^1/_{417}$ of his annual income,— in other words that the poor man paid, in proportion to his means, about 4 times as much as the man who was worth $100,000.[35]

The workingmen of this period also complained bitterly of monopolies, and particularly of the banking system of the time, including the so-called Bank of the United States. This was before the days of general incorporation acts and every corporation, therefore, received its charter as a special privilege and was to that extent a monopoly. In order to meet the need

33 Philadelphia *National Gazette*, Nov. 15, 1827; quoted from the New York *Courier*.

34 Prison Discipline Society, *Sixth Annual Report*, 1831, pp. 66, 67.

35 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Oct. 8, 1831.

for credit facilities to sustain a growing commerce with deferred payments, a large number of banks had been chartered by the various States with the privilege of issuing paper money. The resulting flood of paper money, backed only by the credit of individual banks, was a serious hardship to working people who, therefore, wished to see the entire banking system abolished.

Yet of all the grievances of which the workingmen complained, the lack of a public education system, free from the taint of charity, occupied the foremost place. Though the principle of free, tax-supported schools had long been firmly established in Massachusetts and most of New England, such States as New York and Pennsylvania were still in the stage of private schools for all children whose parents could pay tuition, and charity schools for the rest. Even in New England public schools were generally much less efficient than private schools, and Rhode Island had no public school system whatever.[36]

In 1829 the Public School Society of New York City estimated that some 24,200 children between the ages of five and fifteen years in that city were not attending any school whatever.[37] The number attending public schools was at the same time estimated as about 10,000 and the number attending private schools as about 17,500. But even in the so-called public schools, which were conducted by a private organisation, the Public School Society, a small fee was charged until 1832. There was considerable dissatisfaction with the work of this society, and in 1830 the reason given for the fact that a large number of children were roaming the streets was that the public schools, in spite of their fee, were considered as charity schools.[38]

In Pennsylvania, where parents had to declare themselves too poor to pay for the education of their children before they were allowed the questionable privileges of the public schools, so

[36] Carlton, *Economic Influences upon Educational Progress in the United States, 1820–1850*, in University of Wisconsin, *Bulletin*, No. 221, 88–122.

[37] Bourne, *History of the Public School Society of the City of New York*, 111; from "Address of the Trustees of the Public School Society in the City of New York," 1829. This "Address" was quoted extensively in a "Report of the Standing Committee of the New York Association for the Protection of Industry, and for the Promotion of National Education," published in the *Free Enquirer*, Sept. 30, 1829.

[38] New York *Working Man's Advocate*, May 1, 1830.

much odium was attached to these schools that they were practically useless, and the State became distinguished for the number of children not receiving any schooling. As late as 1837, after the legislation of 1834, 1835, and 1836, it was estimated that 250,000 out of 400,000 children in Pennsylvania were not in any school.[39] In 1836 large numbers of new pupils were admitted, but for some years the pauper taint remained upon the public schools of Pennsylvania.

In New Jeresy, in 1835, a labour paper stated that "out of a population of about 300,000, there were 15,000 adults unable to read, and 12,000 children were entirely destitute of the means of education."[40] And in Delaware in 1830, the income of the school fund was said to be totally insufficient to maintain the required number of free schools and the schools were therefore "committed to the public, to be supported by subscriptions, contributions and donations, like bible, tract or missionary societies."[41] Conditions in other States were little, if any, better.

In 1833 it was estimated that in the entire United States 1,000,000 children between the ages of five and fifteen were not in any school, and that of these 80,000 were in the state of New York.[42] The next year the number of illiterate children in the United States was placed at 1,250,000.[43]

For the children who were sent into the factories at an early age the long hours precluded, of course, any possibility of obtaining even the most rudimentary education. A memorial presented to Congress by the Providence Association of Workingmen stated that in Pawtucket there were "at least *five hundred children,* who scarcely know what a school is."[44] In Manayunk (a suburb of Philadelphia) where "hundreds of boys, seven years old and upwards" were said to be employed daily "from *dawn till eight* in the evening,"[45] conditions were at least equally bad. A labour paper, indeed, stated that not more than one-sixth of the boys and

39 *Farmers' and Mechanics' Journal* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania), Sept. 8, 1838; quoted from the Portland *Transcript.*

40 *National Trades' Union*, Apr. 25, 1835.

41 *Delaware Free Press*, Jan. 30, 1830.

42 *Mechanics' Magazine*, II, 69, August, 1833.

43 *People's Magazine*, II, 18, 19, Apr. 19, 1834.

44 Luther, *Address to the Working Men of New-England* (1st ed.), 21.

45 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Nov. 21, 1829.

girls employed in factories in Philadelphia were capable of reading or writing their own names, and that many instances were known in which parents who were "capable of giving their children a trifling education one at a time" had been "deprived of that opportunity by their employer's threats, that if they did take one child from their employ, (a short time for school), such family must leave the employment — and," added the writer, "we have even known these threats put in execution." [46] Another writer threatened that if a certain family, which had been discharged because of the withdrawal of one child to go to school, was not re-employed, he would hold the name of the employer "up to the scorn and contempt of every good citizen." "Unless something is done by our government," warned this writer, "to compel those misanthropes to treat the children in their employ like human beings, the result of their present infamous practices will be grievously destructive to the liberties of the people in the next generation." [47]

At the time of a Paterson strike for eleven hours in 1835 the vigilance committee of the strikers said of the children: "Scarcely time allowed them to take their scanty meals, they retire to their beds at night worn down and exhausted with excessive labour; — hence they are deprived of any privilege except working, eating and sleeping. Is it to be wondered at, that our country has become the great theatre of mobs, yea, we may say murderers too, when we remember that the poor and their children in manufacturing towns and districts are kept in ignorance and regarded but little superior to the beasts that perish?" [48]

The "education of children in manufacturing districts" was made the subject of a committee report at the first convention of the New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics, and Other Working Men. According to this report, out of about 4,000 factory hands covered by statements made to the committee by delegates to the convention, 1,600 were between the ages of seven and sixteen. These children, said the report,

[46] *Ibid.*, Aug. 21, 1830; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 61, 62.

[47] *Ibid.*, Aug. 21, 1830.

[48] "Circular" issued by the Vigilance Committee and published in the *Radical Reformer and Working Man's Advocate*, Sept. 19, 1835, 236–239; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 195–199.

worked about fourteen hours a day, including not more than an hour for both breakfast and dinner; a child could not be taken from the mill to be placed in school, even for a short time, without losing his place; and parents who had a number of children in a mill were not "allowed to withdraw one or more, without withdrawing the whole." The only opportunity these children had to obtain an education, therefore, was on Sunday and after half past eight in the evening on other days. Three "honorable exceptions" were mentioned — Lowell, where children under twelve were not employed in the mills but had schools provided for them by the corporations; and Chicopee, Massachusetts, and New Market, New Hampshire, where schools were provided "and the children actually employed in mills allowed the privilege of attending school during a portion, say about one quarter of the year." [49]

Little did such treatment of the unfortunate poor harmonise with labour's awakened aspirations for the benefits of equal citizenship. Thus compelled by the forces of economic evolution, shaped by the political and social conditions of the time, and inspired by Rousseau's ideas of social equality as laid down in the Declaration of Independence, the first American labour movement made its appearance in 1827. Though a wage-earner's movement, it was by no means class-conscious in the modern sense, but was rather an uprising of the poor against the rich, regardless of functional distinctions, and was fully in accordance with the philosophy of the Declaration of Independence.

[49] *Free Enquirer*, June 14, 1832; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 195–199.

CHAPTER II

RISE AND GROWTH IN PHILADELPHIA

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The American labour movement made its first appearance in Philadelphia in 1827. Though at first manifesting itself through a trade union demanding shorter hours of labour, it was soon converted into a political party demanding primarily public education. Throughout its four-year duration, the movement had for its keynote a desire for equal citizenship, the two essentials of which, it was believed, were leisure and education. As in each of these aspirations the unity of action transcended the limits of one trade, which had circumscribed all previous labour agitations, they produced a *labour movement.*

The earliest evidence of unrest appears to have been the

extensive circulation in the spring of 1827 of a pamphlet [1] containing "a general view of the evils under which the working people are laboring and a plan for their efficient removal." "It is true," said this pamphlet, "in this favored nation we enjoy the inestimable blessing of 'universal suffrage,' and constituting as we everywhere do, a very great majority, we *have the power* to choose our own legislators, but . . . this blessing . . . can be of no further benefit to us than as we possess sufficient *knowledge* to make a proper use of it. It will be an instrument of unlimited good to the great mass of the people when they shall possess that degree of intelligence which will enable them to direct it *for their own benefit;* but at present this very blessing is suffered, through our want of information, to be directed against our prosperity and welfare by individuals whose interest is at variance with ours." The author therefore urged the establishment in every city and large town in the United States of a FREE PRESS and of a library with reading and lecturing or debating room, open every evening and "on all days of relaxation from business." One of the results of this pamphlet was the formation of the Mechanics' Library Company, a committee of which later published the *Mechanics' Free Press,* the earliest labour paper of which any numbers have been preserved.

TEN-HOUR STRIKE OF 1827

If legislators had done their duty, maintained the author of this pamphlet, instead of scientific inventions and improvements having resulted in injury because of difficulty in securing employment, hours would have been reduced from 12 to 10, to 8, to 6, and so on "until the development and progress of science have reduced human labour to its lowest terms." Apparently stimulated by this statement, 600 journeymen carpenters of Philadelphia went on strike in June, 1827, for a ten-hour day. And out of this strike grew the Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations.

The carpenters had been working from "sun to sun." In winter this meant comparatively short hours; but during the

1 No copy of this pamphlet appears to have been preserved but an extract from it was published in the *Mechanics' Free Press*, June 21, 1828.

short days hundreds of carpenters were unemployed, for the bulk of the work was done during the late spring, the summer, and the early fall when the days were long and the men could be required to work from twelve to fifteen hours. This system the workingmen declared to be "grievous and *slave* like." They therefore resolved that ten hours "industriously employed" were "sufficient for a day's labour." [2]

The master carpenters promptly adopted resolutions declaring it "inexpedient and altogether improper" to grant a ten-hour day, which, they said, would deprive them of about one-fifth the usual working time of their employés, the journeymen. They regretted "the formation of any society that has a tendency to subvert good order, and coerce or mislead those who have been industriously pursuing their avocation and honestly maintaining their families," and declared "that the present price per day given to Journeymen Carpenters, is as high as can be afforded by their employers, when the whole time of the workman is given." They further resolved not to employ "any Journeyman who will not give his time and labour, as usual," and, after mutually pledging themselves "to support and fully carry into effect the foregoing resolutions," requested "of their employers a co-operation in the above measure." By their "employers" they meant the capitalists who furnished the money and gave them the contracts for building. Finally, those present signed the resolutions, and a committee was appointed to procure the signatures of master carpenters who had not attended the meeting.[3]

The journeymen replied by resolving to "refrain from all labour as House Carpenters until the business becomes regulated by corresponding committees." At the same time they appointed a committee of twelve to manage the details of the strike. Three duties were assigned to this committee. First, it was to negotiate "with any committee of Master Carpenters, which they may think proper to appoint"; second, to distribute the funds of the organisation "to those poor Journeymen House Carpenters who stand in need of assistance during the stand out"; and third, to receive "proposals from the citizens

[2] *Democratic Press*, June 14, 1827; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 81.

[3] *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, June 18, 1827; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 81, 82.

for the execution of carpenter's work, which they will undertake," according to the announcement, "on reasonable terms, and execute in a workmanlike manner." [4]

Two days later there appeared over the signature, "The Journeymen House Carpenters," an "Address" which was largely devoted to a refutation of the charge that the proposed reduction in hours would deprive their employers of a fifth part of their usual time. This, they said, was a miscalculation, and they proceeded to support their assertion by an interesting statement of the actual number of hours which they were accustomed to work. "In the longest day in summer," they said, "there are but 15 hours sun, and deducting 2 hours for meals, leaves 13 hours for work: in the shortest day there is but 9 hours sun, and of course 8 hours work, averaging 10½ throughout the year: now we propose to work 10 hours during the summer, and as long as we can see in the winter, taking only one hour for dinner, and we can accomplish nearly 9 hours work in this manner in the shortest day. The average is 9½ hours; thus their loss would be but about one-twelfth part of the time, and we maintain not any in the work." The journeymen further charged that the real reason for the masters' objection to the reduction in hours was that it would "deprive them of the power they have hitherto had of employing a man during the summer, in the long days, and either discharging him in the winter, or reducing his wages, as it will make a journeyman of nearly as much value in the winter as in the summer." This address was an appeal to the "citizens of Philadelphia," with whom, said the journeymen, "rests the ultimate success, or failure, of our cause." [5]

Meanwhile the "Journeymen House Painters and Glaziers of the City and County of Philadelphia" had called a meeting the object of which was doubtless the establishment of a ten-hour day; and the journeymen bricklayers had passed one resolution "that ten hours be considered as a day's work," and another endorsing the "*Journeymen Mechanics' Advocate*, a new weekly paper about to be published in this City," and recommending it "to the patronage of journeymen mechanics

[4] *Freeman's Journal*, June 15, 1827; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 83, 84.

[5] *Democratic Press*, June 20, 1827; *Doc. Hist.*, V. 82. 83.

generally." [6] At the same time the bricklayers solicited a call for a meeting of masters in order that the masters should appoint a committee to confer with them.[7]

The master carpenters advertised for journeymen to come to Philadelphia, and stated that hands were very scarce and that 300 or 400 could find immediate employment at the best wages.[8] Thereupon a "Communication" appeared which stated that the invitation to carpenters to come to the city was "a most gross imposition upon the credulity of our working brethren," and that sufficient hands were already in Philadelphia "to do all the work that is required." [9]

At this point the agitation of the building trades' workmen, so vigorously waged for ten days or more, disappeared from public view. But when the struggle was renewed the next spring the journeymen claimed that they had "gained one-half last season without funds." [10] In April a correspondent of the *Mechanics' Free Press,* arguing that "thousands yet unborn will reap the advantages should the labourer succeed," urged that the city council be petitioned to pass an act "making ten hours to constitute the standard day's work." [11] And in June several hundred carpenters were said already to have secured their object, and the others were urged in an "Address" to "maintain their cause." [12]

MECHANICS' UNION OF TRADE ASSOCIATIONS

Out of this ten-hour movement grew the first union of all organised workmen in any city. Not only the bricklayers and the painters and glaziers, but other trade societies, had become interested in the struggle of the carpenters, and it was determined to form a central organisation for mutual aid and protection in similar disputes. Some time during the latter half of 1827, therefore, there was formed the Mechanics' Union of

6 *Democratic Press,* June 20, 1827. This paper was, if published, doubtless the first labour paper in the United States, and perhaps in the world, but no evidence has been found of its existence.

7 The call for such a meeting was published in the *Democratic Press* of June 22, but nothing further appears.

8 *Ibid.,* June 18, 1827.

9 *Ibid.,* June 20, 1827.

10 *Mechanics' Free Press,* June 7, 1828.

11 *Ibid.,* Apr. 19, 1828.

12 *Ibid.,* June 14, 1828. Four years later the carpenters of Philadelphia were still complaining that they were obliged to work from sunrise to sundown. The *Co-operator,* Apr. 17, 1832.

Trade Associations.[13] All trade societies were invited to join and "those trades who are as yet destitute of trade societies" were urged to "organize and send their delegates as soon as possible." [14]

The preamble to the constitution voiced a vigorous protest against economic exploitation and social inequality. The journeymen complained that they laboured unceasingly for a bare subsistence in order to maintain "in affluence and luxury the rich who never labour"; that their situation would necessarily in time render the benefits of liberal institutions inaccessible and useless to them; and that the accumulation of the products of their labour into "vast, pernicious masses" was calculated "to prepare the minds of the possessors for the exercise of lawless rule and despotism, to overawe the meagre multitude, and fright away that shadow of freedom which still lingers among us."

"The real object, therefore, of this association," they declared in conclusion, "is to avert, if possible, the desolating evils which must inevitably arise from a depreciation of the intrinsic value of human labour; to raise the mechanical and productive classes to that condition of true independence and inequality [*sic*] which their practical skill and ingenuity, their immense utility to the nation and their growing intelligence are beginning imperiously to demand; to promote, equally, the happiness, prosperity and welfare of the whole community — to aid in conferring a due and full proportion of that invaluable promoter of happiness, leisure, upon all its useful members; and to assist, in conjunction with such other institutions of this nature as shall hereafter be formed throughout the union, in establishing a just balance of power, both mental, moral, political and scientific, between all the various classes and individuals which constitute society at large." [15]

Such were the ambitious purposes of the first city central labour union. It does not appear, however, that this union

[13] *Pennsylvanian* (Philadelphia), Apr. 5, 1836. The *Mechanics' Free Press*, on Oct. 11, 1828, referred to the "present effort of the working people" as having been "originally developed in part, in the fall of 1826, in a trade society in this city." The date here given is evidently a mistake as the movement did not begin until the fall of 1827.

[14] *Ibid.*, Apr. 19, 1828. This is the first number of the *Mechanics' Free Press* which has been preserved.

[15] *Ibid.*, Oct. 25, 1828; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 84–90.

ever supported a strike. Instead, although one clause of its original constitution is said to have prohibited political action,[16] its programme early drove it into politics.

By May, 1828, the Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations had resolved to submit to its constituent societies a proposition to nominate candidates "to represent the interest of the working classes" in the city council and the state legislature. Three reasons were given for this action, first that "some of the most prominent evils which have found place to the detriment of the welfare of society, but especially of the working classes," were to be attributed to "an injudicious use, or a criminal abuse of the elective franchise"; second, that "ambitious and designing men, by means of intrigue are enabled to secure to themselves those immunities and privileges guaranteed alike to all by the wholesome provisions in the great charter of our rights"; and third, that "the ordinary mode of effecting nominations of candidates, and of conducting elections for officers in the several departments of the city, county and commonwealth, tend only to concentrate in the hands of a few what should be the property of all." [17]

Political action was immediately endorsed by the trade unions. The carpenters' society, one of the most powerful in the Mechanics' Union, said that it entertained "the most heartfelt satisfaction and approbation for the measures in contemplation." [18] Other similar resolutions were passed by the cordwainers,[19] the hatters,[20] and other trade societies. At the July meeting of the Mechanics' Union a by-law was accordingly adopted providing for the nomination of candidates for the next election.[21] This action was said to have been taken "with a unanimity seldom witnessed in any of the political parties." [22]

From this date, though the political movement advanced, the Mechanics' Union retrograded. At one time it had in its membership 15 trade societies, but the number finally dwindled

16 This statement was made by William English, one of the prominent labour leaders of the period, speaking before the 1834 convention of the National Trades' Union. *The Man* (New York), Sept. 6, 1834; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 215. See I, 426, 427.

17 *Mechanics' Free Press*, May 31, 1828

18 *Ibid.*, July 5, 1828; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 90.

19 *Mechanics' Free Press*, July 26, 1828.

20 *Ibid.*, June 28, 1828.

21 *Ibid.*, Aug. 23, 1828.

22 *Ibid.*, Sept. 27, 1828.

to 4 and some time after November, 1829, the union adjourned *sine die*.[23] Nevertheless, two years later a "Reformed Union Society of Mechanics" called a meeting of all the mechanics of Philadelphia to consider the establishment of a ten-hour day.[24]

GENERAL CAUSES OF POLITICAL ACTION

The official and semi-official documents of the political movement, scattered through the pages of the labour press, treated with comparative brevity those strictly economic grievances which flowed directly from the position of the wage-earner in the industrial hierarchy presided over by the merchant-capitalist. They showed, indeed, that the demand for a ten-hour day took the form of a public employment plank in a political platform. And they took note of the tendency of wages to fall to a lower and lower level, and spoke of "the profits of labour" as "accruing to the *idle* capitalist, instead of the industrious working man."[25] But they laid chief emphasis upon the consequences of economic and political inequalities. "We are fast," said the workingmen, "approaching those extremes of wealth and extravagance on the one hand, and ignorance, poverty, and wretchedness on the other, which will eventually terminate in those unnatural and oppressive distinctions which exist in the corrupt governments of the old world."[26] The working class, meanwhile, "entirely excluded from the advantages derivable from our free institutions," "for want of knowledge and *correct* political information," had been, they believed, subject "to gross imposition."[27]

23 *The Man*, Sept. 6, 1834; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 215. In September, 1828, a special meeting of the Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations was called "to take into consideration a resolution of the Delegates of the Working People of the City." At the same time, in the "Address of the County Delegates to their Constituents," its existence was referred to with pride. (*Mechanics' Free Press*, Sept. 27, 1828.) In January, 1829, a meeting of the Finance Committee of the Mechanics' Union was announced in accordance with a provision of the constitution under which such a meeting was to be held "within ten days of the semi-annual meeting to settle the accounts of the association." (*Ibid.*, Jan. 17, 1829.) As late as Nov. 21, 1829, there appeared in the *Mechanics' Free Press* the announcement of "a stated meeting of the Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations."

24 Philadelphia *Inquirer*, May 11, 1831.

25 Stephen Simpson's letter of acceptance of nomination by the Working Men's party for Congress in 1830. *Ibid.*, Aug. 25, 1830.

26 *Mechanics Free Press*, May 1, 1830.

27 Address of the Working Men's Political Association of the Northern Liberties, issued June 30, 1829, in New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Nov. 7, 1829.

"There appears to exist," said the committee of the Working Men's Republican Political Association of Penn Township, "two distinct classes, the rich and the poor; the oppressor and the oppressed; those that live by their own labour, and they that live by the labour of others; the aristocratic, and the democratic; the despotic, and republican, who are in direct opposition to one another in their objects and pursuits; the one aspiring to dignified stations, and offices of power, the other seeking for an equality of state and advantage; the one apparently desirous and determined to keep the people in ignorance of their rights and privileges, that they may live in ease and opulence at the expense of the labour and industry of the others; the other showing that they are acquainted with the nature of their rights, and are determined to maintain and possess them; the one seeking to introduce and perpetuate amongst us invidious and artificial distinctions, unnatural and unjust inequalities, while the other party declare that all men are created free and equal, enjoying a perfect uniformity of rights and privileges, and that unnatural and artificial distinctions, independent of merit, are pernicious in their effects and deleterious in their consequences." [28]

This state of affairs they attributed to "injudicious and partial legislation, and to the indifference of our rulers to the general welfare." [29] The laws had been made, they said, "for the benefit of the rich and the oppression of the poor." Capital had been favoured, especially through the granting of "charters for monopolising companies," [30] but "the interests of the labourer" had "never been efficiently recognised by legislators." [31]

The conflict, then, was primarily between the rich and the poor, and not between the functional classes, employers and employés. In harmony with this understanding of the problem was the attitude of the party towards employers. At one of the first meetings some difficulty arose on the question as to whether or not employers were included in the call. Several employers claimed the right to full membership in the party, but, though

[28] *Mechanics' Free Press*, June 5, 1830.
[29] *Ibid.*, May 1, 1830.
[30] *Ibid.*, Sept. 20, 1828.
[31] *Ibid.*, May 30, 1829.

the right of employers to be present at meetings was not denied three different persons were refused the position of assistan secretary on the ground that they were employers.[32] In 1829 an editorial in the *Mechanics' Free Press* said: "If an em ployer superintends his own business (still more if he work with his own hands) he is a working man and has an interes on the side of the remuneration of labour. . . . If this view of things be correct, shall we look with a jealous eye on thos employers who prefer being considered working men? who ar willing to join us in obtaining our objects? who wish to se production attended with respectability, comfort and intelli gence?" [33]

Undemocratic legislation had degraded the producer becaus the "revered" name of "equality" had become the "cant o the hypocrite and the power of the demagogue," [34] and becaus the political parties had betrayed the true interests of the peo ple. Although the workingmen maintained that "little or n good" had emanated from either of the old political organisa tions, they complained particularly of the Democratic party "Every working man," said one writer, "is by nature a demo crat, which was well known to the ambitious office hunter, who by assuming the name, and only the name, were conscientiousl and steadily supported by the industrious mechanic and la bourer, who have as steadily been deceived." [35] The shibbolet of party spirit,— party loyalty,— they believed, had kept cor rupt men in office. "So long," they said, "as the people wil be satisfied with the sound of a name, such as Federalist o Democrat; so long as they will be the slaves of corrupt offic hunters and designing politicians, just so long will they hav the shadow instead of the substance." [36]

The remedy proposed was that the workingmen shoul "throw off the trammels of party spirit, and unite under th banner of equal rights." [37] "It is our privilege," they said "and not only our privilege, but our imperative duty, to atten to the affairs of our government, to investigate every measur proposed by our fellow citizens; to examine for ourselves an

32 *Ibid.*, Aug. 30, 1828.
33 *Ibid.*, Sept. 12, 1829.
34 *Ibid.*, May 1, 1830.
35 *Ibid.*, Apr. 10, 1830.
36 *Ibid.*, Oct. 2, 1830.
37 *Ibid.*, Apr. 17, 1830.

see that we are not imposed upon, and exposed to a slavery of mind and body, bitter to our existence and too intolerable to be borne." [38]

THE WORKING MEN'S PARTY

Long before the death of the parent organisation, the Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations, the Working Men's party stood squarely upon its own feet. Before this movement can be understood, however, certain facts should be pointed out in regard to the complicated political situation existing in the city and county of Pennsylvania at that time. The old Federal party, which had disappeared in national politics and practically so in state politics, was still active in local affairs, with *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* as its chief organ. The Democratic party had split into two factions, one known as the Administration or Adams party and the other as the Jackson party. After Jackson's victory in 1828, the anti-Jackson sentiment became subordinated to an anti-Sutherland movement directed against the Congressman elected in 1828 from the First Pennsylvania District. This change was reflected in the decline of the *Democratic Press,* the Administration organ of 1828, and its absorption in November, 1829, in the *Pennsylvania Inquirer,* which had been started in the previous June as a Jackson, anti-Sutherland paper. This branch of the Democratic party was comparatively weak and frequently fused with or nominated the same ticket as the Federal or, as it was later called, the Federal Republican party. Local contests were generally between a fusion ticket put up by Federalists and anti-Jackson or anti-Sutherland men, and the Jackson or Sutherland wing of the Democratic party, with the *American Sentinel* as its organ. When the Working Men's party was organised, in July, 1828, the Federal party was in control of the city, and the Jackson party, as the result of a three-cornered fight, had secured control of the county.

The July meeting of "delegates from different trade societies" which passed the political by-law already mentioned, was held "in order to confer with any committee of mechanics or working men that might meet them on the subject of the next

[38] *Ibid.*, June 5, 1830.

general election." And it, in turn, decided that three district meetings should be held, "called without respect to party politics or sectional names," one in the city, one in the Northern Liberties, and one in Southwark.[39] With these three meetings began the political movement proper.

From the beginning the new movement was obliged to fight for its existence against the machinations of professional politicians who tried either to obtain control of the meetings or to break them up.

These meetings, accordingly, met with varying degrees of success, the one in the city being most fortunate. It was held in the District Court Room and, according to the *Mechanics' Free Press,* was "numerously attended and the proceedings gone through with decency and propriety, but not without considerable opposition from intruders." [40] A preamble and resolutions were adopted recommending independent political action by the workingmen and calling for four district meetings "to form a ticket for Assembly and City Councils." [41] These four district meetings were duly held and each appointed five delegates to a convention for the purpose of choosing candidates for the city council and state legislature.[42] The first meeting of this convention occurred on August 25,[43] but it refrained from nominating candidates until the old parties had acted. The nominations were not announced until October.[44]

Meanwhile the meetings in the Northern Liberties and in Southwark had not been so successful as the one in the city, not because of indifference, but because of efforts of professional politicians to secure control. On the evening appointed for the meeting in the Northern Liberties, Commissioner's Hall "was crowded to excess, as well as the stairways, and every avenue to the building." A chairman and secretary were elected and a set of resolutions read, when tumultuous opposition was raised and cries of "throw the chairman out of the window" arose. Finally, after much confusion and a speech from the

39 *Ibid.*, Aug. 2, 1828.

40 *Ibid.*, Aug. 16, 1828.

41 *Ibid.*, Aug. 16, 1828; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 91, 92. William English, later one of the leaders of the trade union movement, was appointed one of a committee to arrange for the district meetings.

42 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Aug. 23, 1828. One of these delegates, as a result of his election, publicly tendered his resignation "to the gentlemen composing the delegation of North Mulberry Ward friendly to the administration of the general government."

43 Philadelphia *Gazette*, Aug. 27, 1828.

44 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Oct. 4, 1828.

chairman, who said he had "no political or party ends to answer" but only desired to "serve the interests of the working people to whom he was proud to belong," another vote was taken and the chairman sustained, after which the resolutions were read one by one. Further confusion ensued, and one man made a vigorous and bitter speech charging that the chairman and secretary of the meeting were working in the interest of the administration. But finally the same preamble and resolutions as at the city meeting were passed and the meeting adjourned. Some one then proposed that the "Jackson men" should remain, and about one-fourth of the persons present stayed for a second meeting,[45] at which, apparently, separate political action was condemned and the Jackson party endorsed. Of this meeting the *Mechanics' Free Press* said: "In the Northern Liberties the opposition assumed a more imposing attitude, being headed by a notable magistrate of that district [who] . . . assured the mechanics and working men they had no right under heaven or the laws to call such a meeting."[46]

The proceedings in the Southwark District were said to have "capped the climax." "A pitiful farce played off by the leaders of the dominant party (under cover of *false* pretexts — known to them to be false), bore everything down, and quashed the proceedings," said the *Mechanics' Free Press.*[47] The meeting, indeed, appears to have adjourned after rejecting three different preambles and resolutions. But two days later another meeting was held in Southwark at which a resolution was passed to the effect that the writer of the editorial article in the *Mechanics' Free Press* had "improperly and injudiciously interfered with party politics." At the same time the workingmen resolved that "no party political business whatever be transacted in this meeting," that the nominations made by the working people "be confined this year exclusively to those of County Commissioner and Auditor," and that another district meeting be held in the Commissioner's Hall, Southwark, on August 21 to appoint delegates to the County Convention.[48] Accordingly a third district meeting was held at which resolutions were passed providing for co-operation

[45] *Democratic Press*, Aug. 13, 1828.
[46] *Mechanics' Free Press*, Aug. 16 1828.
[47] *Ibid.*
[48] Philadelphia *Gazette*, Aug. 18, 1828.

with the other districts in forming a county ticket, and authorising their delegates, if they should "find it advisable, in order to insure the harmonious fulfilment of their duties in connection with the other delegates, to nominate candidates for State Assembly." They also instructed the delegates to urge that in Moyamensing and Passyunk similar meetings be called to co-operate in the nomination.[49]

Delegates were chosen and a county convention met on September 2, but with several districts still unrepresented. In September, "Addresses," stating the causes and the objects of the movement, were issued by both the "city delegates" and the "county delegates"; and as election day approached various "committees of vigilance" were announced to "support the Working Men's Ticket." [50] The county convention, for example, appointed 129 persons as a "committee of vigilance" for Southwark, Moyamensing, and Passyunk, and a special meeting of "the working men of Manayunk and its vicinity" endorsed the ticket and appointed 10 men as a vigilance committee. The Union Benevolent Society of Journeymen Brushmakers also secured the signatures of 113 members to a resolution pledging them to support the ticket and to form themselves into a committee for that purpose. Headquarters had meanwhile been established.

When the returns came in they showed that the Jackson Democrats had carried everything before them in the city as well as in the county. The 8 candidates who were exclusively on the Working Men's ticket received from 229 to 539 votes in the city and about 425 votes in the county; [51] and, though the candidates of each of the other parties who were also on the Working Men's ticket ran from 300 to 600 votes ahead of their colleagues, the latter party did not show sufficient strength to elect any of its candidates who were also on the Federal ticket. But all of the 21 workingmen's candidates who were also on the Jackson ticket were elected.[52]

49 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Aug. 23, 1828.

50 *Ibid.*, Oct. 11, 1828. The members of the Mechanics' Library Company were requested to form themselves into such a committee.

51 One county candidate for the Assembly received 1,391 votes, but he was an attorney who was next year the candidate of the Jackson-Sutherland Democrats and not of the Working Men's party.

52 *Ibid.*, Oct. 18, 1828; *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Oct. 16, 1828.

Some of the more optimistic party members had hoped for a thousand votes in the city alone,[53] yet defeat had been expected, and the most generally hoped for was that the attempt would afford a demonstration of strength.[54] The workingmen, therefore, were encouraged rather than discouraged. "The result," said the *Mechanics' Free Press*,[55] "has been equal to our most sanguine expectations; yet it may not be equally as satisfactory to our friends."

The mere number of votes polled does not by any means measure the influence of this first political campaign of the Working Men's party. Indirectly it brought from the candidates for Congress[56] of both of the older parties in the city "an open acknowledgment of the justice of working people's attempts to lessen the established hours of daily labour. And accordingly," said the account, "their election bills exhibited, in conspicuous characters, the words '*From Six to Six.*'"[57] According to the *Mechanics' Free Press* "both of the great political parties had attached to their carriages, and stuck up these words, 'The Working Man's Ticket,' coupled with the names of Jackson and Adams."[58]

Decidedly encouraged by the results of this first effort, the workingmen began immediately after the election to form permanent political clubs. Associations of this kind, they believed, would not only aid in the election of public officers, but would secure "general diffusion of constitutional, legal, and political knowledge among working people." For the latter purpose it was suggested that a fund be established, first for the printing and circulation of laws "and other important information," second for procuring a list of all offices "with the duration of terms and salaries attached," third for effecting an arrangement by which legal advice could be supplied gratuitously to every poor man, and fourth for the purpose of enabling the working people to require their elected representatives to use influence in securing appropriations of public money for these and other useful purposes.[59] A little later the *Me-*

53 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Aug. 23, 1828.
54 *Ibid.*, Aug. 9, 1828.
55 *Ibid.*, Oct. 18, 1828.
56 The workingmen did not nominate candidates for Congress.
57 *Ibid.*, Oct. 25, 1828.
58 *Ibid.*, Oct. 18, 1828.
59 *Ibid.*, Nov. 1, 1828.

chanics' Free Press urged all workingmen to "go to the assessor" and "have themselves duly assessed," in order to be "eligible to the right of Franchise." [60]

In the formation of political clubs the district of Southwark appears to have taken the lead. Preliminary meetings were held in December, and in January, 1829, the Workingmen's Republican Political Association was organised and a constitution adopted.[61] This constitution shows that the association was designed to be largely educational in character, to acquaint the workingmen with the laws of the State and the nation, to encourage them to suggest improvements, and to publish and disseminate among them "in the form of pamphlets or otherwise, such information of a political and practical nature as the association may think best calculated to promote the general intelligence and prosperity of society." One of the duties of the "standing committee" was to "procure as far as practicable, correct information of the names and residences of all persons who do not exercise the right of voting, and should it appear that they labour under any pecuniary or other inability that may [be] obviated . . . to remove the same." [62]

This association appears to have united at the spring constable's election with the anti-Sutherland and perhaps also with the Federal party in putting up a ticket called "the People's Ticket" in opposition to the Sutherland forces. This ticket, which the *Mechanics' Free Press* called the "Working Men's ticket," won by an overwhelming majority.[63]

The workingmen of the Northern Liberties were little behind those of Southwark in the formation of a political association. Late in December, 1828, a meeting was held by the "working people of the Northern Liberties" for the purpose "of having their interests represented in the state legislature." The working people of the different districts of the county were requested to meet and appoint committees of conference, and a

60 *Ibid.*, Nov. 29, 1828.

61 *Ibid.*, Jan. 10, 24, and 31, and Feb. 21 and 28, 1829. This word "republican" was also used in the title of the association later formed by the workingmen of the city of Philadelphia. Though it was the name of one of the two great political parties of the day, which was also sometimes called the Democratic party, the workingmen used it in its original sense. We have already seen that the terms "republican legislation" and "republican education" were slogans of the Working Men's party.

62 *Ibid.*, Jan. 24, 1829.

63 *Ibid.*, May 9, 1829; *Democratic Press*, May 4, 1829.

special committee was appointed to confer with the Southwark committee which had been appointed to draft a constitution for a political association.[64]

In March the workingmen of the city resolved to follow the example of Southwark and the Northern Liberties and form a political association,[65] and in May the Republican Political Association of the Working Men of the City of Philadelphia was organised and adopted a preamble and constitution very similar to those of the Southwark association. About the end of August this association issued an "Address to the Working Men of Philadelphia." [66]

Nominations were made in 1829, not by these political associations, but by city and county conventions, delegates to which were chosen in general ward meetings.[67] But in the city these meetings were called by ward committees appointed by the political associations.[68]

"Designing men" on both sides at once began to exert every effort "to direct the strong current of excitement now acting on the working people, into their different party channels." [69] This opposition, as has been seen, at first took the form of violent interference with meetings of workingmen. Just before the election of 1829, also, a meeting of the workingmen of the western wards was broken up by a party of 150 labourers "employed by the City Commissioners." But adjournment to another place was taken and there resolutions were passed declaring the attempt "of public officers to take advantage of the dependent situation of the labourers employed in the public service, by marshalling them for the avowed purpose of frustrating a meeting of freemen in the honest exercise of their rights, . . . a pitiful abuse of power, and a gross violation of republican principles." [70]

Soon, however, more subtle and more dangerous methods of attack were adopted, namely, flattery and lip service to the workingmen's cause. The measures advocated by the working-

64 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Jan. 3, 1829. In June the Working Men's Political Association of the Northern Liberties issued an "Address," which was published in the New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Nov. 7, 1829.

65 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Mar. 21, 1829.

66 *Ibid.*, Aug. 22, 26, 1829.

67 *Ibid.*, Aug. 8 and 22, and Sept. 7, 1829.

68 *Democratic Press*, Aug. 17, 1829.

69 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Oct. 11, 1828.

70 *Ibid.*, Oct. 10, 1829.

men were practically ignored by both the regular parties, but both employed intrigue, from within and from without, as their chief weapon in the fight against the new political movement. Both, indeed, were seriously crippled in their action by the fact that they had neither a record nor a programme which inspired confidence. Political lines were decidedly blurred and neither old party had any clearly defined, distinctive policies to present to the people. As a result, party names, as the workingmen said, had little meaning.

The efforts of the Democratic party, which claimed a sort of proprietary interest in the workingmen, were directed primarily toward splitting the new party into factions. The Federalists, on the other hand, were continually trying to use the workingmen's movement for their own advancement.[71]

The accusation that the workingmen, by favouring the Binns, or Anti-Sutherland faction, were "playing into the hands of the Federal Party"[72] was more than ever emphatic in 1829, and it appears to have been more than ever difficult for the new movement to keep free of political entanglements. A distinct effort was made to protect the party from these influences. Many of the ward meetings, for example, passed resolutions warning their delegates not to fuse with either of the other parties,[73] and the accusation that they were "leagued with the Federalists" was declared "a gross libel."[74] The city convention, moreover, resolved "that no communication from either of the political parties will be received by their delegation,"[75] and early in October the new party published a statement to the effect that "Whereas, certain individuals are circulating reports calculated to injure the cause of workingmen, charging them with views friendly to one political party, and unfriendly to the views of another, . . . that the workingmen disclaim any intention of aiding any one of the political parties in preference to the other."[76]

71 *Ibid.*, Sept. 20, 1828.

72 *American Sentinel*, Oct. 5, 1829. In September there was issued from the office of the *American Sentinel*, evidently as a bait to the workingmen, a new paper called the *Mechanics' Journal*. The first number contained an "Address to the Working Men of the County of Philadelphia," which vigorously attacked John Binns, the editor of the *Democratic Press*. He answered this by professing undying friendship for the workingmen. *Mechanics' Free Press*, Sept. 26, 1829.

73 *Ibid.*, Aug. 29, 1829.

74 *Ibid.*, Oct. 10, 1829.

75 *Ibid.*, Sept. 12, 1829.

76 *Ibid.*, Oct. 3, 1829.

Primarily to prove their non-partisanship the workingmen this year made their nominations before either of the other parties had acted, with the idea that the result would show rather which party was more eager for their support than which party they favoured. Out of 32 candidates on the city ticket 9 were also named by the Federal party and only 3 by the Democratic party.[77] In the county, out of nine workingmen's candidates for the senate and assembly, three were endorsed by the combined anti-Sutherland and Federal parties, and none by the Democratic party. The two candidates for the assembly endorsed by the fusionist convention were said to have been "forced upon it against the manifest desire of a majority of the delegates."[78]

Of the nine workingmen's candidates for commissioners of the Northern Liberties, one was adopted by the Federal anti-Sutherland faction, one by the Democrats, and two by both. The county offices appear to have been given rather as a reward for services in the Revolution than as a party matter, but the Democratic party, represented by the *Sentinel,* did not endorse any of the four candidates first put up by the workingmen, and it does not appear definitely that the Federal or the anti-Sutherland parties put up any official candidates for these offices. But they appear to have supported at least two of the workingmen's candidates.

One of the nominations in 1829 gave rise to the most serious discord which occurred in the ranks of the workingmen during the entire political movement in Philadelphia. This was the nomination for the State Senate of James Renaldson,[79] the candidate of the Federal and anti-Sutherland parties. This nomination was made by the county convention, and appears to have precipitated the hostility between the Democratic and the Federal workingmen, which resulted the next year in the presen-

77 There was no Congressional election in 1829 and in the city the two factions of the Democratic party were united on a single ticket which was supported by the *Sentinel* and *Inquirer*. In the county, the anti-Sutherland faction and the Federalists were united on a ticket which was supported by the *Inquirer*, and also by the *Democratic Press*, which apparently refused to support either city ticket.

78 *Ibid.*, Oct. 10, 1829.

79 James Renaldson was a member of the State Assembly and appears to have been an employer of labour. Just before the election a public statement, signed by 22 of his employés who claimed to have worked for him from 15 to 30 years, spoke of his "kindness, and liberality in the payment of wages," and stated that he was the real friend of the workingman. *Democratic Press*, Oct. 12, 1829.

tation of only two tickets, the Democratic and the "Opposition." For it was followed by the secession from the movement of a group of so-called "Democratic workingmen," who held a meeting and endorsed the regular Democratic candidate.[80] Ever afterwards there appears to have been closer affiliation of the workingmen's party proper with the amalgamated Federal and anti-Sutherland factions.

Notwithstanding dissensions, the election returns showed that the workingmen had this time secured the balance of power. In the city the vote was close and all of the twelve candidates of the workingmen's party who were on either of the other tickets were elected. The united Democrats, indeed, succeeded in electing only five candidates in addition to the three who were first nominated by the workingmen. From 808 to 913 votes were cast for the candidates who were exclusively on the latter ticket.

In the county, although the Democrats in general retained their power, the workingmen were strong enough to bring about the election of both their candidates for the assembly who had been endorsed, though unwillingly, by the anti-Sutherland and Federal combination. Their candidate for the Senate, who was also the fusionist candidate, was defeated, but this was probably due to the serious split in their ranks on the subject of this particular nomination. The workingmen's candidates for county commissioner and sheriff were both elected, but their candidates for auditor and coroner were defeated. The four workingmen on the commissioner's ticket of the Northern Liberties, who were also on either of the other two tickets, were elected, but here again the fusionists failed to elect any candidate who was not also on either the Democratic or the Workingmen's ticket. The candidates for the assembly who were exclusively on the latter ticket received from 1,414 to 1,441 votes.[81]

Of the 54 candidates put up by the working men, then, in both the city and the county, 20, all of them also candidates of one of the other parties, were elected. This included all of their candidates who were endorsed by either of the other

80 *Ibid.*, Sept. 3, 1829.

81 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Oct. 17, 1829; *National Gazette*, Oct. 14, 1829; *American Sentinel*, Oct. 14, 1829; *United States Telegraph*, Oct. 20, 1829.

parties except the candidate for the State Senate. The total vote of the workingmen, in both the city and the county, had increased from less than 1,000 to nearly 2,400.[82] Most of this increase was in the county, where the vote for assembly candidates jumped from about 425 to about 1,425.

The workingmen seem to have been well satisfied with the result. An editorial in the *Mechanics' Free Press* stated: "The balance of power has at length got into the hands of the working people, where it properly belongs, and it will be used, in future, for the *general* weal." [83]

After the election a committee of the Working Men's Republican Association of Southwark issued an address in which it congratulated the workingmen on having increased their vote "fourfold," denied that they were leagued with either Federalists or anti-Masons, stated that they had gained nothing by the "pretended and flimsy friendship" of the fusionists, and exhorted the workingmen to "be on the alert" and "prepare for the coming season." "The objects we have in view," said this committee, "are hallowed by the sympathy of patriotism — it is the finish of the glorious work of the Revolution." [84]

The movement, indeed, was decidedly prosperous. Even the *Free Trade Advocate* acknowledged that the *Mechanics' Free Press* had a circulation of upwards of 1,500 and that the "workingmen" had made "so formidable an attack upon the ranks of both the political parties, as to have possessed themselves pretty nearly of what may be called the balance of local power." [85]

Immediately after the election the workingmen set themselves again to the task of education and organisation. Meetings, of which there had been every week during the campaign from four to a dozen in different parts of the city, were little less frequent after the campaign was over.

The activity of the workingmen during this period took two principal forms: first, more thorough organisation of the city and county by wards and districts; and second, extension of the

82 Nevertheless it was said that several employers had threatened their workmen with discharge in case they did not vote the ticket of the employers' choice and that "some were driven *through fear of losing their places*, to bow to this galling yoke." *Mechanics' Free Press*, Oct. 24, 1829.

83 *Ibid.*, Oct. 17, 1829.

84 *Ibid.*, Oct. 31, 1829.

85 *Free Trade Advocate*, Nov. 14, 1829.

field of political action to other parts of the State. Soon after the election the workingmen's General Republican City Association recommended the formation of auxiliary ward associations. Within a month the workingmen of Upper Delaware Ward,[86] had organised a permanent association, which recommended that the other wards also form political associations; expressed approval of "the contemplated course of our friends of the county in forming themselves into Tract Societies, for the dissemination of political information"; recommended that part of the funds of the different associations, including the General Association, be appropriated for that purpose; and further resolved, for the sake of securing "perfect harmony of action," to adopt, with only slight modifications to suit the different circumstances, the constitution of the General Association.[87] Locust Ward organised soon afterward,[88] and the formation of ward organisations proceeded rapidly during the winter and spring, so that in the city convention which met on August 4, 1830, delegates were present from fifteen ward organisations.[89]

The other form of activity adopted by the workingmen was an effort to extend the field of political power. In February, 1830, the Working Men's Association of the Northern Liberties issued a call for a special city and county convention to be held in May for the purpose of considering certain questions of party organisation and the extension of the field of activity, and this was followed in April by a "circular" on the same subject.[90] Meetings were later held, not only in the Northern Liberties but in Southwark, Byberry Township, Penn Township, Moyamensing, and Passyunk, to select delegates to this convention.[91]

The convention met on May 1, but transacted little business at that time.[92] But a committee was appointed to draft an address to the workingmen of Pennsylvania, and on June 12 another meeting was held, at which this address and a set of resolutions were adopted.[93]

86 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Oct. 31, 1829.
87 *Ibid.*, Nov. 14, 1829.
88 *Ibid.*, Nov. 7, 1829.
89 *Ibid.*, Aug. 7, 1830.
90 *Ibid.*, Apr. 17, 1830.
91 *Ibid.*, Apr. 24, and May 1, 1830.
92 *Ibid.*, May 1, 1830.
93 The address was not published until July. *Ibid.*, July 10, 1830; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 114–128.

What response was evoked by this address to the workingmen of Pennsylvania is not known. But the year before there had been some agitation among the "farmers and mechanics" of Phillipsburg, and early in 1830 among the workingmen of Lancaster and Carlisle. The *Mechanics' Free Press* was said to have been extensively circulated in Phillipsburg; the Working Men's Political Association of Philadelphia had been asked to send its constitution;[94] and on September 26, 1829, a meeting of workingmen had been held, and a permanent political association formed. The workingmen of Lancaster had also held a meeting in the following January "for the purpose of forming a ticket for select and common councils," and had submitted an address to the electors of Lancaster which the *Mechanics' Free Press* pronounced "a masterly production."[95] About the same time the workingmen of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, had formed themselves into a society similar to that of Phillipsburg and had declared in favour of general education.[96] And about the time the Philadelphia workingmen issued their address to the State an association had been formed in Pike township, Clearfield County, called the Working Men's Society of the Grampion Hills.[97]

In September the *Mechanics' Free Press* was asking "what our friends are about at Milesburg (Centre County), Lancaster, Carlisle, and Pottsville. It is time they were up and doing. They are strong enough at each of these places to carry their point." At the same time the editor congratulated the workingmen of Harrisburg and of Clearfield County on the formation of tickets "for the coming election."[98] The workingmen of Pittsburgh also appear to have had a ticket in the field in the fall of 1830.[99]

Meanwhile, an independent movement had been started in Erie, Pennsylvania, and a new party organised, called the "People's Party." This movement, like that of the workingmen,

[94] *Mechanics' Free Press*, Aug. 22, 1829.

[95] *Ibid.*, Feb. 6, 1830.

[96] *New York Working Man's Advocate*, Feb. 13, 1830; quoted from the *United States Gazette*; *Mechanics' Free Press*, Feb. 6, 1830.

[97] *Mechanics' Press*, June 12, 1830; *Mechanics' Free Press*, June 5, 1830.

[98] *Ibid.*, Sept. 11, 1830. The *Delaware Free Press*, Sept. 18, 1830, also announced that the workingmen of Harrisburg had resolved to form a ticket.

[99] New York *Working Man's Advocate*, July 14, 1830; *Delaware Free Press*, July 31, 1830.

which it closely resembled, was caused by the degeneracy and corruption of the older parties and by the fact that they were governed by "ambitious leaders, who make politics a trade." It endorsed "a general system of education," "a thorough modification of our militia system," "a vigorous but economical and prudent prosecution of the Pennsylvania canal policy, and all other works of acknowledged public utility," and "the redress of various other grievances, in which the great body of the working people are most deeply interested." It further declared unavailing "the sneers and jests of our opponents [who] stigmatise us as workies, anties, democrats, feds, and tories." [1]

During the latter part of July and the early part of August, 1830, meetings were held in the different wards and townships of Philadelphia to appoint delegates to nominate a ticket for the October election.[2] The city convention met on August 4 [3] and that of the county on August 14.[4] On September 11 a conference of members from both conventions (48 from the county and 42 from the city) was held to nominate candidates for the State Assembly.[5]

To find candidates who would be true to the interests of the working class and who would at the same time be possessed of sufficient education, ability, and experience properly to fulfil the duties of the various city and county offices and of the state legislature was not an easy matter. The first problem was how the candidates were to be selected; the second, whether workingmen or "tried friends" of the workingmen should be nominated; the third, how the party was to know the true opinions of its candidates upon the measures which it advocated; and the fourth, to what extent the new party should nominate candidates of the old parties, i. e., what degree of fusion there should be with either or both of the old parties.

The candidates, as has been seen, were chosen by conventions, delegates to which were elected at ward and district meetings.

1 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Aug. 7, 1830; quoted from the Erie (Pennsylvania) *Observer*.

2 *Mechanics' Free Press*, July 24 and 31, and Aug. 7, 1830.

3 *Ibid.*, July 31 and Aug. 7, 1830.

4 *Ibid.*, Sept. 18, 1830. The County Convention contained delegates from the Northern Liberties, Penn Township, Kensington, Southwark, Moyamensing, Byberry, Germantown, Boxborough, Blockley and Kingsessing (one district), Bristol, and Passyunk. *Ibid.*, July 24 and 31, Aug. 7 and 14, and Sept. 18, 1830.

5 *Ibid.*, Sept. 18, 1830.

But the convention system was at that time comparatively new, and in 1830 there was considerable dissatisfaction with the results. The number of delegates to the workingmen's county convention was therefore increased in that year to 66, as compared with 26 chosen by the other parties.[6] The delegates were usually, though not always, workingmen.

In order to avoid even the semblance of a possibility of the new movement degenerating into a struggle for office the delegates to conventions were usually required to pledge themselves either "not to accept any appointment whatever to public office," [7] or not to nominate other members of the convention for office. The county convention in 1830 passed a resolution not to "nominate any of its members, nor any person who shall have resigned his seat, for any office whatsoever." [8]

Wide differences of opinion developed as to whether the candidates should be workingmen or "tried friends" of the workingmen. This question began to be agitated before the 1828 convention. But before the 1830 campaign the idea appears to have gained ground that the candidates, so far as possible, should not only be chosen independently of the other parties, but should be themselves workingmen. Immediately after the election of 1829 a meeting in Upper Delaware Ward resolved to "support for office no men but those who are engaged in productive pursuits . . . and who are in favour of extending to the productive classes that protection to which they are justly entitled"; and to "vote, in all cases, independent of party considerations." [9] The same idea was expressed by the county convention.[10] And the "farmers, mechanics and workingmen" of Allegheny County [11] declared that "however patriotic a man may appear to be, it is evident that none can so completely understand our interests, and that none will be so vigilant in protecting them as those, who in promoting the public welfare, most effectually secure their own."

Whether belonging to their own class or not, the workingmen required their candidates to pledge themselves, if elected, at first somewhat indefinitely "to promote the interests and sup-

6 *Ibid.*, July 17, 1830.
7 *Ibid.*, Sept. 27, 1828.
8 *Ibid.*, Sept. 18, 1830.
9 *Ibid.*, Nov. 14, 1829.
10 *Ibid.*, Sept. 18, 1830.
11 *Delaware Free Press*, July 31, 1830.

port the claims of the Working People," [12] but later to support certain definite measures. Many of the wards instructed their delegates not to vote for candidates who were not willing to pledge themselves publicly to the measures advocated by the workingmen.[13]

That some method by which candidates could be controlled was essential is shown in the fact that by 1829 the new party began to be threatened by the penalty of success — the acquisition of members whose support was more dangerous than their opposition. In that year the charge was made that, although "the original views and motives of the workingmen were no doubt good . . . they are admitting into their ranks and their confidence, disappointed office hunters, men who but a few weeks since were decidedly inimical to their cause, but having been foiled in their schemes of personal aggrandizement through the party to which they belonged, are now, at the eleventh hour, stepping over into the ranks of the workingmen; and are immediately brought forward as candidates for office." [14] And the editor of the *Mechanics' Free Press* admitted that he feared this was the case "in several sections of the county." Again in 1830 he warned the workingmen that "the cause is now respected by more than have upright intentions — there are eleventh hour men now as well as in past times. They will introduce new land marks in such profusion as to hide the original ones from our view. We already hear of one person for this office and another for that — men who are not known to the working people, except as the active spirits of the old parties. These things should be discountenanced; they should not be permitted." [15] In spite of the apparent prosperity of the movement at this time, it was evidently beset by dangers not the least of which was that new members, who cared nothing for the original aims and purposes of the workingmen would cause them to lose sight of the very principles which they had been organised to establish.

The question of fusion with the old parties, which took the form of nominating their candidates, accordingly became more and more acute. In 1830, out of 33 candidates put up by the

12 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Aug. 16 and 23, 1828.
13 *Ibid.*, July 31, 1830.
14 Quoted in *Ibid.*, Aug. 29, 1829.
15 *Ibid.*, June 19, 1830.

city convention, 7 were also on the Democratic ticket, 12 on the Federal Republican ticket, and 1 on both. In the county only two tickets were put up for the assembly, one apparently the regular Democratic ticket and the other a ticket which the *Mechanics' Free Press* called the "Working Men's" and the *National Gazette* called the "Opposition." [16] The city workingmen put up an independent candidate for the regular term in the Senate, but they endorsed the Federal Republican candidate for an unexpired term. They also endorsed the Federal Republican candidate who was running against Sutherland for Congress.[17] At the same time they entered into national politics by nominating Stephen Simpson, who was also the candidate of the Federal party, against Sutherland for Congress in the first district.[18]

In the midst of all their political difficulties the workingmen were confronted with the charge that they were agrarians and opposed to the Christian religion. At first this accusation, even as made in the press of Philadelphia, appears to have been directed ostensibly against the New York movement, which was more vulnerable on this point.[19] But soon even the workingmen of Philadelphia were put on the defensive against this charge. "Let the subject of religion alone," cautioned one writer, "or the death-knell of our Associations will soon be sounded." [20]

16 After the election an editorial in the *Mechanics' Free Press* (Oct. 23, 1830) stated that in the county the old parties "united on one ticket and gave it a decided majority, with the hopes of completely crushing us." But the *American Sentinel* (Oct. 13, 1830) claimed that the Democrats had "carried the Senator and eight members of the Assembly, over the united forces of Federalism and Workeyism."

17 By this time the irreconcilable anti-Sutherland people appear to have been completely absorbed by the Federal Republican party.

18 *Mechanics' Free Press*, July 31, Aug. 21, 28, Sept. 25, and Oct. 2, 1830. Simpson endorsed the workingmen's demands. But after he was elected he became editor of the *Pennsylvania Whig*, and was said by a correspondent of the *Mechanics' Free Press* to have performed a "political somerset" and completely abandoned "all former opinions, professions and asservations . . ." (Quoted in the New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Oct. 8, 1831.) In the same year he published a book called the *Working Man's Manual* with an appendix defending the Bank of the United States. The *Working Man's Advocate* (Oct. 8, 1831) said in regard to this book: "It may contain some good things, but if the author's mode of reasoning has led him to conclude that an institution which increases the inequality of property and takes from the laborer the fruits of his labor without giving him an equivalent, is a benefit to the country (though it *should* add to its aggregate wealth) — if the reasoning of Mr. S. respecting the United States Bank, has led him to this conclusion, the *working men* will not have much confidence in the result of his reasoning on other subjects, and will leave his book for those who are the advocates of a 'System' which will give them a comfortable subsistence without labor."

19 See I, 234 *et seq.*

20 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Aug. 1, 1829.

During the campaigns of 1829 and 1830 the Philadelphia workingmen repeatedly disclaimed "any intention of interfering in the remotest degree, with any man's religious opinions." [21] And to prove that they were not "disciples of Miss Wright" [22] they cited "the fact of the workingmen's existence as a body, on the same principles they now profess, for nearly a year previous to her appearance amongst us." [23] The special city and county convention of 1830 also declared that the union of the workingmen was not "for the depression or advancement of any particular religious persuasion"; [24] and after the election the editor of the *Mechanics' Free Press* stated that they were "decidedly opposed to the principles of Agrarianism," that they had "on all occasions kept the introduction of matter on that subject from [their] columns," and that they had "uniformly considered those who introduced either the subject of Agrarianism or religion into our political proceedings, as the avowed enemies of our righteous cause." [25]

In spite of these denials the workingmen found themselves, especially during the campaign of 1830, repeatedly accused of "aiming at an agrarian law for the equal distribution of property, and with being leagued with foreigners to overthrow religion, and the existing system of government, and a number of other equally absurd projects." [26] And in April, 1830, the *Mechanics' Free Press* spoke of "those portions of the county which have hitherto been prevented from meeting with their brethren by the unfounded calumnies of political demagogues." [27]

This accusation appears to have militated against the success of the workingmen's ticket. On the eve of the election the *American Sentinel* and *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* both reiterated the charge that the workingmen were "advocates of agrarianism and infidelity." [28] The former even published a quotation from the *Friend of Equal Rights,* the organ of the Skidmore faction in New York, to show the pernicious agrarian

21 *Ibid.*, Oct. 3, 1829. This statement was repeatedly published in connection with the "Working Men's Ticket."

22 See I. 240, note.

23 *Ibid.*, Nov. 14, 1829. Resolutions passed at a meeting of workingmen in Upper Delaware Ward. Frances Wright lectured in Philadelphia in June and July, and again in September, 1829.

24 *Ibid.*, Oct. 16, 1830.

25 *Ibid.*

26 *Ibid.*, Feb. 6, 1830.

27 *Ibid.*, Apr. 24, 1830.

28 *Ibid.*, Oct. 16, 1830.

principles of "the Political Working Men," and in the same number gave an extract from a letter written by Frances Wright "as illustrative of her principles and those of her followers." "This course is considered proper," said the *Sentinel,* "as both the Federal and Working Men's Parties have placed upon their tickets for Senators and Assembly, in the city and county of Philadelphia, men who are known to be her disciples." [29]

The election was held on October 12, and the Democrats won by a decisive majority, both in the city and in the county. Except in the Northern Liberties, where the workingmen elected their entire list of 8 candidates for commissioners, the only successful candidates put up by their party were the 8 on the city ticket who were also the nominees of the Democratic party. In the city the candidates who were exclusively on their ticket received from 812 to 1,047 votes.[30] In the county the "opposition" ticket received from 4,919 to 5,030 votes, but this very fact tends to prove that the ticket was also supported by the Federal Republicans. The 2 workingmen's candidates for county commissioners who were probably not on any other ticket, received respectively 1,651 and 1,688 votes in the county and 2,742 and 2,801 votes in both city and county.[31] The total voting strength of the Working Men's party appears to have increased between 1828 and 1829 by from 300 to 400 votes.

Yet the party had actually elected a much smaller number of its candidates than before, and it had lost its balance of power obtained in 1829. The result, therefore, was practical defeat. "Workeyism," said the *American Sentinel,*[32] "is dead and buried in the city and county of Philadelphia, and as Federalism was united with its life, it is a pity they should be parted in death. . . . The result of the city and county vote has consigned *Workeyism* to the tomb of the Capulets; and there is no further nucleus for malcontents to form upon."

Nevertheless, the *Mechanics' Free Press,* though admitting that "the result is not equal to the sanguine expectation of our friends," called this election, as it had called that of 1829, "a

29 *American Sentinel,* Oct. 11, 1830. See I. 240, note, and I. 234 *et seq.*, for the activities and opinions of Frances Wright and of Skidmore.

30 Only two candidates received over 867 votes. One was the candidate for the Senate, who received 998 votes, and the other a candidate for the Assembly, who received 1,047 votes.

31 *Ibid.*, Oct. 13, 1830; *Mechanics' Free Press,* Oct. 16, 1830.

32 *American Sentinel,* Oct. 13, 1830.

triumph of principle." The result, it believed, only added "another instance of the blindness of the workingmen to their own interests, and exhibits in bold and striking colours, how easily the public liberties may be endangered by the supineness of the people themselves!" [33] A week later the *Free Press* announced that the result of the election, "instead of damping the ardour of our friends, as our opponents would wish, seems to have inspired them with renewed energy and courage." "Meetings," it said, "have already taken place and committees have been appointed to carry into effect our principles, and we look forward, from the zeal manifested by our friends thus early, that the principles of *practical democracy*, and those of the revered Jefferson, will assuredly triumph at the next election." [34]

In April of the next year the *Mechanics' Free Press* was recommending "an immediate call of a convention, to take place at an early day, that each ward of the city, and every district of the county, may be represented therein to take into consideration the best and most efficient means that can be adopted to secure our independence and to further our success at the next general election." [35] Whether or not this particular convention was ever held is not known, but the ward and district political associations of workingmen were active during the following summer,[36] and in July a Working Men's Convention was holding sessions in Philadelphia.[37] On August 6, moreover, a notice was published of ward meetings of workingmen to elect delegates apparently to a nominating convention.[38]

In the fall election of 1831 the workingmen lost definitely and finally their balance of power. Their exclusive candidates

[33] *Mechanics' Free Press*, Oct. 16, 1830.

[34] *Ibid.*, Oct. 23, 1830. In the midst of the political campaign of 1830 the workingmen of Philadelphia also found time to hold a meeting and congratulate the workingmen of Paris on the part they had taken in the "recent glorious triumph of civil and religious liberty in France." *Ibid.*, Oct. 2, 1830; *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Sept. 28, 1830.

[35] *Mechanics' Free Press*, Apr. 16, 1831. The only extant files of the *Mechanics' Free Press* end in April of 1831 and we have no reliable source of information as to the movements of the workingmen after that date. This paper, though it passed at this time into other hands and, as the *Philadelphia Times*, with the sub-titles *Mechanics' Free Press and Working Man's Register*, became "degenerate," later evolved into the *National Laborer*, the organ of the trade unions in 1836 and 1837.

[36] *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, June 29 and July 1, 1831. The workingmen appear to have held in this year, as in 1830, a special celebration of the Fourth of July. (*Ibid.*, June 27 and July 2, 1831.)

[37] *Ibid.*, July 15, 1831.

[38] *Ibid.*, Aug. 6, 1831.

for city offices received only from 348 to 390 votes, and their total average vote in both the city and the county was only about 1,400. In the city, of the 30 candidates nominated by the workingmen, only 3 were on the Democratic ticket, while 10 were on the Federal Republican ticket. What county candidates of the other parties the workingmen endorsed, cannot be determined, but they appear to have had 4 independent candidates for the Assembly who received from 1,316 to 1,800 votes. And their candidate for county auditor received 377 votes in the city and 1,069 in the county, making 1,446 in all.[39]

This was the last year in which the Working Men's party nominated a ticket,[40] and nothing further is known of the political movement which originated in the carpenters' strike of 1827.

No small factor in the downfall of the Working Men's party was the danger lurking in the presidential question. Though the measures advocated most strongly did not call for Federal action, this danger was recognised from the beginning.[41] As late as the spring of 1831 the *Mechanics' Free Press,* in the last number, which has been preserved,[42] called the attention of the workingmen to the impending dangers to them as an independent political body from " the untimely, and unceasing agitation which exists on the question of the presidency." Whatever the workingmen's preferences for this office their party was not strong enough to cope with the distractions of a national campaign and in the political whirlwind of 1832[43] it finally perished.

The Philadelphia movement did not fail as a result of a return to industrial prosperity, for times did not grow better until the beginning of the wildcat bank era in 1834, nor did it fail as a result of legitimate internal dissensions based on dif-

39 *Ibid.*, Oct. 13, 1831.

40 In 1832 only two tickets were in the field, the Democratic or " Jackson " ticket as it was called by its opponents, and the " anti-Jackson " ticket, and the latter won by a substantial majority both in the city and in the county. *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* and the *American Sentinel*, October, 1832, *passim*.

41 *Mechanics' Free Press*, April 16, 1831.

42 *Ibid.*

43 The year 1832 was a peculiarly exciting one in Pennsylvania, for it was a year in which the election of President coincided with a gubernatorial election, a combination which, owing to the three-year term of state officers, occurred only once in a dozen years. The cholera epidemic of 1832 probably also helped to kill the workingmen's movement, for 2,314 cases of cholera and 935 deaths occurred in Philadelphia during the summer, when the workingmen would normally have been most active. Young, *Memorial History of the City of Philadelphia*, I, 462.

ferences of principle, which have been the bane of many a labour party. Its failure was primarily due to a combination of purely political causes, namely, the workers' inability to "play the game of politics" and the all too excellent acquaintance of the old party politicians with the "tricks of the game."

SPECIFIC DEMANDS OF THE PARTY

During the campaign of 1828 the chief evils for which remedies were demanded by the working people were four in number: "the legislative aid granted for monopolizing, into a few rich hands, the wealth creating powers of modern mechanism"; "the excessive distillation and vast facilities for vending 'ardent spirits'"; "the lottery system"; and "the want of an enlarged and more general diffusion of views and real intelligence among the mass of the people." [44]

To these four issues brought forward by the city convention the county convention added two others, banking institutions, and organised charity. The feeling was evidently bitter against "chartered charitable associations" which "speculate largely in the products of one branch of the labouring class, taking advantage of their necessities and their ignorance." [45]

Of these six issues, two, the liquor question and the charitable association question, received little emphasis in later years. But meanwhile, four other subjects had been brought forward in articles in the *Mechanics' Free Press.* One of these was the demand that men should be sent to the state legislature and the city council who would "not be backward in supporting the interest of *Trade Society* meetings among journeymen as well as employers — men who would think it a duty, in their legislative capacity, to modify or soften the received opinions of 'Conspiracy and Combination' in relation to meetings of working men, and who would give to the workingman the privilege of laying a price on his own labour." [46] This question, though it later took the form of a demand for the repeal of the common law of conspiracy as applied to trade unions,[47] was never made

[44] *Mechanics' Free Press*, Aug. 23, 1828.

[45] *Ibid.*, Sept. 27, 1828. One is reminded of the English Poor Law.

[46] *Ibid.*, June 7, 1828.

[47] *Ibid.*, Feb. 13, 1830. Attention was called to the fact that, though this law had recently been repealed in England, convictions under it had lately taken place in Chambersburg, Penn. It was also

a formal part of the political programme of the workingmen. The other three subjects brought forward informally in 1828, namely, the operation of the lien law, the insolvent law, and the militia law, later became planks in the party platform.

In 1829 three new issues were introduced, the tariff, money, and prison labour. But none of these except the money question, which was a phase of the complaint against the banks, was of permanent importance in the Working Men's party.

A number of new issues were brought forward in 1830, the chief one being imprisonment for debt. Others were the simplification of laws, the high security demanded of public officers, and the auction system. Lawyers were, in general, unpopular with the workingmen,[48] and the delays and expenses of courts of justice were the subject of considerable complaint,[49] though never mentioned in formal resolutions. The practice, too, of "requiring heavy pecuniary securities for the fulfilment of trusts reposed in public officers," was protested against on the ground that it shut out from "offices of trust and profit" men "of limited means." Instead of such pecuniary securities the workingmen proposed that public defalcation should be made a penal offense.[50] As for the auction system, though rarely mentioned as a cause of complaint, one writer declared it "a ruinous and authorised monster" which had caused "the great reduction in journeymen's wages."[51] The auctioneer was often the precursor of the merchant-capitalist, and as such he formed an important link in the evolution of American industry.[52]

In the last number now in existence of the *Mechanics' Free Press* appears conspicuously at the head of the editorial column the following list of "Working Men's Measures": "Universal education, abolition of chartered monopolies, equal taxation,

pointed out that "employers, being comparatively few in number, can combine secretly and effectually for the reduction of wages," but that journeymen could not do this and were therefore at a disadvantage.

48 Just before the election of 1830 an editorial in the *Mechanics' Free Press* (Oct. 9, 1830) said: "Lawyers have no congeniality with working men; they are opposed to the success of the working men's principles — they are opposed to the simplification of the laws, and of course they cannot receive our votes. On the working men's ticket we have no attornies." On the Federal ticket, according to the *Free Press*, there were four, and on the Democratic ticket three, lawyers.

49 *Ibid.*, Jan. 23, Feb. 6 and 13, 1830.

50 *Ibid.*, July 10, 1830.

51 *Ibid.*, Aug. 7, 1830.

52 See below, I, 231, 232 note.

revision or abolition of the militia system, a less expensive law system, all officers to be elected directly by the people, a lien law for labourers, no legislation on religion." [53] Three of these, equal taxation, direct election of officers, and no legislation on religion, were new issues.

In addition certain purely local issues were raised, such as distributing Schuylkill water in the workingmen's section of the city, cleaning the streets and alleys occupied by the poor, divesting city patronage of party influence, giving to residents of the city preference in all contract work, and reducing the hours of labour of public workmen to ten a day.

In all, then, the workingmen at one time or another expressed themselves upon some sixteen to twenty separate questions of state and national importance and upon half a dozen local issues. On seven of these subjects they were particularly emphatic and insistent. These were monopolies, paper money, mechanics' liens, imprisonment for debt, the militia system, lotteries, and public education. The money question, which was first specifically mentioned in 1829, was really a part of the monopoly question, for the chief monopolies complained of were banks and these banks issued the paper money to which the workingmen objected.

The demand for the abolition of all monopolies, especially banking monopolies, brings out the main economic motive behind the uprising. The opposition to banks was dictated by two considerations: first, that paper currency, which at that time meant, not government greenbacks, but bank notes, defrauded the wage-earner of a considerable portion of the purchasing power of his nominal wage, a strictly " wage-conscious " consideration; and second, that banks restricted competition and shut off avenues for any man who did not enjoy their credit facilities.

In order fully to understand the latter consideration it must be kept in mind that this was a period when bank credits began to play an essential part in the pursuit of industry; that with the extension of trade into the States and Territories south and west, with its resulting delay in collections, business could be carried on only by those who enjoyed credit facilities at the

[53] *Ibid.*, Apr. 16, 1831.

banks. As credit follows the market just as the "constitution follows the flag," the beneficiary of the banking system was inevitably, not the master or journeyman mechanic, but the merchant-capitalist. To the uninitiated, however, this arrangement appeared in the light of a huge conspiracy entered into by chartered monopolies — banks — and by unchartered monopolists — merchant capitalists — to shut out possible competition by both master and journeymen mechanics.

In 1829 candidates for the legislature were interrogated as to their views, both "of the effects of exclusive monopolies, and of a redundant paper currency," [54] and later the candidates of the workingmen were said to be pledged to oppose "all exclusive monopolies" and to endeavour to bring the banking system "within the limits prescribed for a sound policy." [55] Before the election of 1830, too, all candidates, including Simpson, who ran for Congress, were pledged against chartered monopolies.[56]

The workingmen acknowledged that "occasions may arise in which individuals should be secured by charters of incorporation" but, they said, "accurate examination will . . . show these occasions to be very few, and rather to be considered as alarming incidents, than the harbinger of good." For, they added, "everything which limits individual enterprize, or tends to make the *many* dependent on the few, must in principle be radically wrong." [57] "Is it equal or just," they asked, "that a few should be empowered by law to monopolise a business to themselves, to the exclusion and disadvantage of the many; certainly not. All competition may be laudable, when left free to all persons, as it may have a tendency to prove beneficial to the community at large. But chartered monopolies make a few wealthy, to the disadvantage and misery of the mass of the people. They frequently turn many industrious men out of employment, or reduce their wages so low, that when a working man becomes sick, meets with an accident, or is overtaken with old age, and unable to labour, that he becomes a burden to society." [58]

54 *Ibid.*, Oct. 10, 1829.

55 *Ibid.* During the winter of 1829 the workingmen of Philadelphia took an active part in an agitation against the chartering by the legislature of new banks. This was not, however, strictly a workingmen's movement. *Ibid.*, Feb. 21 and Mar. 21, 1829.

56 *Ibid.*, Sept. 25, 1830.

57 *Ibid.*

58 *Ibid.*, Oct. 2, 1830.

The banking system, according to the workingmen, enabled the few "to live in affluence upon the labour of the many." [59] But the chief complaint was of "the injurious effects of an uncertain currency, and the ever accompanying fluctuations in employment and wages." [60] The special county convention of 1830 complained particularly of the issuing of paper money by the banks,[61] and Simpson, the candidate of the Working Men's party for Congress, spoke of "the subtraction from the profits of labour, by the paper currency system," [62]—"that fruitful source of oppression to the poor man, and profit to the speculator, which dooms the poor industrious man to drag out a miserable existence." [63]

Though the workingmen's movement had for its keynote the desire for complete equality among all citizens of the State,—a condition which, mistaking the words of the Declaration of Independence for actual reality, they assumed to have been ushered in by its very proclamation — it was inevitably driven to demand for the mechanic more than an equality with the capitalist. Thus, as early as 1829 labour's inferior bargaining power forced the workingmen to ask that the State grant to labour privileges over and above those granted to capital. The specific demands of this nature were for a mechanics' lien law and the abolition of imprisonment for debt, both soon destined to become the first instances in America of legislation for the protection of labour.

Active agitation for a mechanics' lien law seems to have begun early in 1829 with the presentation to the state legislature of a memorial "of the journeymen mechanics, and other workingmen of this city and county, praying for better security in their wages." [64] No action was taken in the matter, and in the fall the agitation was renewed,[65] with the result that a bill was introduced "for the security of mechanics, journeymen and

59 *Ibid.*, July 31, 1830.
60 *Ibid.*, July 10, 1830.
61 *Ibid.*, July 10, 1830; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 114–123.
62 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Sept. 25, 1830. The paper currency system, he said, "unsettles the standard of value; and by the power of contraction and expansion on the monied world, keeps property fluctuating, so as to plunder the working man and profit the capitalist. It affects prices injuriously — it imposes a tax on the labour of all; and while it builds palaces, it causes a thousand hovels to rise where one mansion of content and competency springs up as its fruit."
63 From the proceedings of a meeting "of the citizens of the First Congressional District friendly to the election of Stephen Simpson," in *Ibid.*, Oct. 2, 1830.
64 *Ibid.*, Feb. 7, 1829.
65 *Democratic Press*, Aug. 27, 1829.

labourers." This was simply a bill to make persons employed on wages by insolvent debtors privileged creditors, "and as such preferred as far as the sum of fifty dollars for each of such creditors before all other creditors of such insolvent debtor." The *Mechanics' Free Press,* in discussing this bill, said: "It has been suggested, that in case of non-payment of wages, a lien should be allowed the labourer on the articles by him manufactured, or on the tools or machinery by him used." [66] This bill failed of passage, but was again introduced, in a revised form, in 1830.

The abolition of imprisonment for debt, though not prominently mentioned as an issue until 1830,[67] was then vigourously advocated and became, as in New York, one of the most important demands of the workingmen.[68] It was made the subject of a resolution adopted by the workingmen of North Mulberry Ward,[69] and was mentioned in the "Address" of the workingmen of Locust Ward [70] and also in the "Address of the City Delegation of Working Men to their Constituents." [71] The workingmen's candidate for Congress was strongly in favour of the abolition of imprisonment for debt. "A law," he said, "that makes poverty a crime, and a poor man a felon, after those very laws have made poverty inevitable, is not only cruel and oppressive, but absurd and revolting." [72]

As compulsory service in the militia and the lottery system affected the daily life of every workingman, these subjects were given great prominence, especially the former.

The Pennsylvania militia law, as passed in 1822, provided that, with the exception of persons employed in public service, "every free able bodied white male person who has resided within this commonwealth for one month, and is between the ages of eighteen and forty-five . . . shall be enrolled in the militia of this commonwealth." The law further provided that the militia should be "paraded and trained" as follows: "In companies, on the first Monday of May in every year: and the

66 *Mechanics' Free Press,* Nov. 21, 1829.

67 The first official mention of imprisonment for debt as a grievance was in the "Address of the City and County Convention to the Working Men of the State" in *Ibid.,* July 10, 1830; also in *Doc. Hist.,* V, 114–123, where it was bitterly denounced.

68 *Mechanics' Free Press,* Aug. 7, 28, and Oct. 9, 1830.

69 *Ibid.,* Sept. 25, 1830.

70 *Ibid.,* Oct. 2, 1830.

71 *Ibid.*

72 *Ibid.,* Sept. 25, 1830.

battalion parades and training, shall commence on the second Monday in May, in every year; and shall continue in such order as the brigade inspector shall direct, on every day of the week, except Sunday, until all the battalions of the brigade shall have paraded." Non-attendance on any day of "parade and training" was penalised by a fine of from $2 to $5 for officers and $1 for non-commissioned officers and privates. The fines did not apply to militiamen under the age of twenty-one. Provision was made for a court of appeals composed of three commissioned officers and this court had the right to remit fines whenever a good reason for absence was presented. The fines which were not remitted were to be collected in twenty days through constables upon a warrant issued by the brigade inspector. In case collection should be impossible "for want of sufficient goods and chattels to pay the fine or fines against him, every such delinquent shall be committed by the proper collector to the custody of the sheriff or jailer of the proper county, to be held and detained until he pays the said fine or fines, or is discharged agreeably to the insolvent laws of the commonwealth." [73]

Complaint of the militia system had been made for the first time in 1828, but this did not become an important issue until the campaign of 1830. Late in 1829, however, a meeting of workingmen of Walnut Ward was called to "memorialize the legislature for a modification or repeal of the militia and insolvent laws." [74] And in the following January the Republican Political Association of Working Men of the City appointed a committee to prepare a memorial to the legislature on the militia laws.[75] Both the county [76] and the city conventions [77] in 1830 expressed themselves upon this point, and the candidates for the legislature were said to be pledged "to use their utmost efforts, if elected, to modify the present oppressive militia system, which annually squanders your wealth and toil in useless riot and extravagance." [78] The candidate for Congress also expressed himself as opposed to the existing system which, he said, was "acknowledged on all hands to be a disgrace

[73] *Acts of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, 231–247. Failure to report his correct age or domicile subjected the offender to a fine of $10.

[74] *Mechanics' Free Press*, Nov. 28, 1829.

[75] *Ibid.*, Jan. 23, 1830.

[76] *Ibid.*, Sept. 18, 1830.

[77] *Ibid.*, Oct. 2, 1830.

[78] *Ibid.*, Sept. 25, 1830.

to our State." [79] "We want a militia law"; said the workingmen, "for at present we have none but what benefits the collector of fines; the State, nor its citizens derive no benefit from it; hence it is imperfect and rotten to the core." [80]

The demand for the abolition of the lottery system, though especially emphasised in 1828 and 1829,[81] and an important issue in 1830,[82] appears to have been dropped in 1831. The lottery system was spoken of in 1829 as one of the six means "whereby the labourer has been defrauded of the work of his hands," [83] and in 1830 it was characterised as "licensed gambling." [84] In the latter year its abolition was demanded by the county convention,[85] the city convention,[86] and the special city and county convention.[87] And the workingmen's candidates for the legislature in 1830 were pledged to "spare no honorable exertions" to abolish lotteries, "whether instituted for the building of churches or the cutting of canals." For lotteries, according to the workingmen, had been "the fruitful parent of misery and want to numberless heart-broken wives and helpless children, who have beheld the means of their subsistence lavished in the purchase of lottery tickets." "The energies of honest industry," they said, "have sunk under the blasting power of this demon of destruction, which preys on the innocent, while it feeds the guilty." [88]

The paramount emphasis laid upon education shows that the workingmen's movement was a revolt primarily directed against social and political rather than economic inequalities. For the general system of education, which was the most important and most frequently repeated demand of the workingmen, meant primarily public schools free from the taint of charity. "We are well aware," said the "city delegates" in 1828, "that large endowments have been made to colleges for the rich; and that some appropriations have been made in the

79 Letter from Stephen Simpson, in *Ibid.*

80 *Ibid.*, Aug. 7, 1830.

81 The lottery system was one of the evils mentioned in the "Address of the Working Men's Political Association of the Northern Liberties," issued on June 30, 1829 (New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Nov. 7, 1829); and also in an editorial in the *Mechanics' Free Press*, Oct. 17, 1829.

82 *Ibid.*, June 12, Aug. 28, and Oct. 9, 1830.

83 *Ibid.*, Aug. 26, 1829.

84 *Ibid.*, July 24, 1830.

85 *Ibid.*, Sept. 18, 1830.

86 *Ibid.*, Oct. 2, 1830.

87 *Ibid.*, July 10, 1830; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 114–123.

88 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Sept. 25, 1830.

establishment of Public Schools for the Poor; but to the latter of these institutions the mark of the beast has been affixed in the most repulsive characters, and that which should have been to us a matter of right, is dealt out in the less palatable form of charity to the 'needy' and 'indigent.'" [89] And the address of the "county delegates" closed with a denunciation of "the manner in which the funds wrested from us for the purpose of education . . . have been appropriated." "In many of the schools under the supervision of the directors we find," it said, "instead of experiencing the sympathetic feeling, or friendly regard of prudential teachers, the children are treated as the convicts of the work-house, having to submit to the tyrannical government of masters, who not having their own passions under control, and being withal filled with prejudice, and having imbibed from their employers a due proportion of their aristocratic feeling, are the last men on earth to whose guardianship the children of any generation ought to be entrusted." [90]

In 1829 public education took its place distinctly and definitely at the head of the list of measures urged by the Working Men's party. Early in that year the preamble proposed for the Working Men's Republican Political Association of Southwark declared that "real liberty and equality have no foundation but in universal and equal instruction," which "has been disregarded by the constituted guardians of the public prosperity." [91] The lack of education for the children of the poor was also named by the "Standing Committee of the Republican Political Association of Working Men of the City of Philadelphia" as one of the six means "whereby the labourer has been defrauded of the work of his hands." [92] And the candidates for the state legislature nominated by the Working Men's party were pledged to favour "a general system of state education." [93]

The campaign for a public school system was vigorously prosecuted. Early in September, 1829, the delivery of an address on the subject "to the working people at the Southwark Hall," by a Mr. Heighton,[94] was followed by the appoint-

89 *Ibid.*, Sept. 20, 1828.
90 *Ibid.*, Sept. 27, 1828.
91 *Ibid.*, Jan. 24, 1829.
92 *Ibid.*, Aug. 26, 1829.
93 *Ibid.*, Oct. 10, 1829.
94 Mr. Heighton delivered three addresses upon "the rights of the working people and the cause of universal edu-

ment of a committee "to co-operate with such other similar committees as may be appointed in the city and county of Philadelphia, and also by correspondence throughout the State, to plan, devise, arrange and digest such a system of free, equal and universal instruction as shall appear to such joint committees best adapted to promote the intellectual, moral and equal prosperity of the population of the districts by which they are appointed." The meeting further resolved "that such plan or system, when devised and digested, be laid before the public meetings of the inhabitants, for further discussion, deliberation and final adoption, and that our legislature be memorialised from all parts of the State to establish such system by law." [95]

The Working Men's Republican Associations of the Northern Liberties and of the City appointed committees to co-operate with that of Southwark. Late in September a joint meeting was held,[96] and by the end of October subcommittees were energetically at work.[97] A month later a general meeting of the joint committee was held to receive and consider a bill prepared by the subcommittees.[98] Not until early in February, however, was the final report of the "Joint Committees of the City and County of Philadelphia" [99] ready. By that time the public education movement appears to have become in part nonpartisan, for, though it was stated that the committee had been appointed by the workingmen "to ascertain the state of public instruction in Pennsylvania, and to digest and propose such improvements in education as may be deemed essential to the intellectual and moral prosperity of the people," the report was presented at a meeting, or rather three meetings, "of the friends of general and equal education." [1]

This report set forth that, except in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh,

cation," which this meeting ordered published and circulated. *Ibid.*, Sept. 12, 1829.

95 *Ibid.*

96 *Ibid.*, Sept. 26, 1829.

97 *Ibid.*, Nov. 7, 1829.

98 *Ibid.*, Nov. 28, 1829.

99 *Doc. Hist.*, V, 94–107. This report was originally published in March, 1830, in the *Mechanics' Free Press*, the *Delaware Free Press*, the *Free Enquirer*, the New York *Working Man's Advocate*, and probably in other papers of the day. The committee, indeed, resolved "that all editors of journals, both in the German and English language, throughout the State, favourable to education, be respectfully requested to publish" its report. (New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Mar. 6, 1830.) Later, moreover, it was published, together with the proceedings of the three public meetings at which it was considered and finally adopted, in pamphlet form. *Mechanics' Free Press*, Apr. 10, 1830.

1 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Mar. 6, 1830.

and Lancaster, practically no public education existed at that time in the State, and that even in those cities pauperism was the chief principle upon which the public schools were founded. The remedies advocated were, first, the establishment of infant schools, by which was probably anticipated the kindergarten of later years, and of "manual labour" or, as we would call them, manual training schools; second, a radical improvement in the character of instruction furnished, "that education, instead of being limited as in our public poor schools, to a simple acquaintance with words and ciphers, should tend, as far as possible, to the production of a just disposition, virtuous habits, and a rational self-governing character"; and third, the extension of the benefits and privileges of the public schools to all classes of society, rich as well as poor, and to all parts of the State. The committee favoured the establishment in each county of a manual labour school on the plan of Fellenberg's school at Hofwyl, Switzerland, which was in general outline the plan of the modern George Junior Republic.[2] This report of the Philadelphia workingmen, signed by John Mitchell, Chairman, and by William Heighton, Secretary, foreshadowed, not only our general public school system, but our manual training schools, our Junior Republics, and probably also our kindergartens.

The report was accompanied by two bills, one for the establishment of a public school system,[3] and the other for a combination of agricultural and mechanical with literary and scientific instruction. And a document appended to these bills proposed that the money needed to carry them into effect should be raised by a tax on "Dealers in Ardent Spirits." Several resolutions were also adopted, among them one to the effect that "we hereby pledge ourselves to each other and to all the other citizens of the State, that we will never cease to make common cause for the promotion of a system of public education, until all the sources of general instruction are open to every child within this commonwealth." A "committee of correspond-

2 See I, 247. See also Commons, "Junior Republic," in *American Journal of Sociology*, November, 1897, and January, 1898. An interesting description of Fellenberg's school is given by Robert Dale Owen in his *Threading My Way*, 146-196.

3 Published in the *Free Enquirer*, Mar. 20, 1830.

ence" was also appointed to work with other persons favourable to "the cause of universal instruction" and keep watch of the proceedings before the legislature. Finally a memorial was adopted requesting the legislature to pass the two bills.[4]

Naturally this report, which may even now be considered a remarkable document, excited considerable comment, both favourable and unfavourable. As will be seen later, the chief ideas were the same as those brought forward by the Wright-Owen-Evans faction of the workingmen of New York. And these ideas were freely discussed throughout this winter by the labour papers of both cities. The Philadelphia report, however, was issued earlier than any similar document in New York, and gave the best and most complete account of the Hofwyl system of education which the workingmen of both cities advocated. But an important point of difference was that the Philadelphia report proposed only that high schools be on the Hofwyl model, while the later New York report proposed that all schools be on that model.

Meanwhile, in 1830 as in 1829, education was the paramount issue in the Working Men's party.[5] "All history," it was said, "corroborates the melancholy fact, that in proportion as the mass of the people becomes ignorant, misrule and anarchy ensue — their liberties are subverted, and tyrannic ambition has never failed to take advantage of their helpless condition. . . . Let the productive classes, then, unite, for the preservation of their free institutions, and by procuring for all the children in the Commonwealth Republican Education, preserve our liberties from the dangers of foreign invasion or domestic infringement."[6] Education was later called "the first and most important . . . object for which we are contending." "This," added the workingmen, "is the rock on which the temple of moral freedom and independence is founded; any other founda-

4 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Feb. 27, 1830. The resolutions and memorial were also published in the New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Mar. 6, 1830, and the resolutions in the *Delaware Free Press*, Feb. 13, 1830.

5 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Feb. 6, 1830; *United States Gazette* (Philadelphia), June 22 and 23, 1830. A system of general education was also the chief demand of the workingmen of Phillipsburg (New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Oct. 31, 1829), of Carlisle (New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Feb. 13, 1830); and of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (*Delaware Free Press*, July 31, 1830).

6 "Circular to the Working Men of the City and County of Philadelphia" issued by the Working Men's Republican Association of the Northern Liberties, in *Mechanics' Free Press*, Apr. 17, 1830.

tion than this, will prove inadequate to the protection of our liberties, and our republican institutions. In order to support the superstructure, the foundation must be broad. Our government is republican; our education should be equally so." [7]

The workingmen's candidates for the State legislature were all "known to be decidedly in favour of a republican system of education," [8] and their candidate for Congress, Stephen Simpson, who was also the nominee of the Federal party, expressed the greatest amazement that any one could be found who would oppose public instruction in a democratic country.[9] At a meeting of "the citizens of the First Congressional District," one of the chief reasons given for supporting Simpson was that "he is the friend and indefatigable defender of a system of general education, which will place the citizens of this extensive republic on an equality; a system that will fit the children of the poor, as well as the rich, to become our future legislators; a system that will bring the children of the poor and rich to mix together as a band of republican brethren; united in youth in the acquisition of knowledge, they will grow up together, jealous of naught but the republican character of their country, and present to the world the sublime spectacle of a truly republican government, in practice as well as theory." [10]

The idea of the workingmen of Philadelphia was distinctly that "one or more mechanical arts" should be combined with "literary and scientific instruction." [11] "Our institutions of instruction," they said, "should be so located and organised as to command health, exercise at the various mechanic arts, or agriculture, at the same time [that] a knowledge of the natural sciences, and other useful literature is taught." [12]

Even compulsory education appears to have been contemplated. In 1830 a writer in the *Mechanics' Free Press* [13] proposed a tax "on estates of persons deceased" and "on lands near the public improvements" for the support of schools. "Officers," he added, "should be chosen in every district to take a census of the children, and to see that the education of

7 *Ibid.*, Oct. 2, 1830.
8 *Ibid.*, Oct. 9, 1830.
9 *Ibid.*, Sept. 25, 1830.
10 *Ibid.*, Oct. 2, 1830.
11 Preamble of Working Men's Republican Association of North Ward, in *Ibid.*, Apr. 3, 1830.
12 "Address of the City Delegation of Working Men to their Constituents," in *Ibid.*, Oct. 2, 1830.
13 *Ibid.*, Feb. 6, 1830.

none was neglected. Every parent should be obliged to send his children to some school or other, to a reasonable extent, or the care of his children should be taken from him in case of neglect and refusal." In other words this writer proposed to levy an inheritance tax and a tax on the unearned increment of land values in order to support a system of compulsory education.

The workingmen urged free education on the ground of equality, and their opponents fought it on the same ground. The chief evidences of this opposition are found in the *National Gazette* of Philadelphia, which was, in general, a literary rather than a political paper. During July and August, 1830, the *Gazette* gave particular attention to this subject. "To create or sustain seminaries for the tuition of all classes," it said, "to digest and regulate systems,— to adjust and manage details,— to render a multitude of schools *effective*,— is beyond their [the people's] province and power. Education in general must be the work of the intelligence, need, and enterprise of individuals and associations. . . . Some of the writers about universal public instruction and discipline, seem to forget the constitution of modern society, and declaim as if our communities could receive institutions or habits like those of Sparta. The dream embraces grand *Republican* female academies, to make *Roman* matrons!" [14] Another argument was as follows: "The 'peasant' must labour during those hours of the day, which his wealthy neighbour can give to the abstract culture of his mind; otherwise, the earth would not yield enough for the subsistence of all: the mechanic cannot abandon the operations of his trade, for general studies; if he should, most of the conveniences of life and objects of exchange would be wanting; languor, decay, poverty, discontent would soon be visible among all classes. No government, no statesman, no philanthropist, can furnish what is incompatible with the very organisation and being of civil society." [15] A little later the *National Gazette* asserted that "the scheme of universal Equal Education at the expense of the State, is virtually 'Agrarianism.' It would be a compulsory application of the means of the richer,

[14] *National Gazette*, July 12, 1830; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 108, 109.

[15] *National Gazette*, July 10, 1830; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 108.

for the direct use of the poorer classes; and so far *an arbitrary division of property among them.*" [16] An effort was made in the same article to set "the more thriving members of the 'mechanical and other working classes'" against the project of public education by telling them that they "would themselves feel the evil of the direct taxation." And the author complained that the real reason the "poorer classes of Philadelphia" did not avail themselves "of our Common Schools," was "not that they are averse to the charity education," but that "they prefer, or are obliged, to use their offspring at home, or consign them to manufactories." [17]

16 *National Gazette*, Aug. 19, 1830; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 110.

17 *National Gazette*, Aug. 23, 1830; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 112.

CHAPTER III

WORKINGMEN'S PARTIES IN NEW YORK

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Two years after the Philadelphia awakening the labour movement began in New York City. As in Philadelphia the ten-hour question was the immediate cause of organisation. But while the Philadelphia workingmen took the aggressive part, in New York, where they already had the ten-hour day, they were on the defensive. The movement began with a meeting of mechanics,[1] but passed over the intermediate stage of a union

1 In the fall of 1828 there had been a vigorous anti-auction campaign in New York City in which a few journeymen mechanics appear to have taken an active interest. This, however, was not primarily a wage-earner's movement, but a revolt of small, independent master mechanics against the auctioneers who were

federation, which, as we saw, figured prominently in Philadelphia, and immediately plunged into politics.

The New York political movement was particularly distinguished, first by its radical character and the resulting violence of its internal dissensions; and second by the support which it received from other parts of the State. Before it was a year old the party had twice split into two, first, on the so-called "agrarian" issue and second, on the so-called "state guardianship" plan of education. Thus, by the middle of 1830 New York had three political organisations, each claiming to be the true, "original" workingmen's party. Meanwhile, the movement spread to many other parts of the State, from New York to Albany and from Albany to Buffalo, and a State convention nominated candidates for governor and lieutenant-governor. In the city the movement was of "mechanics and other working men," but in most of the other places farmers were also included.

BACKGROUND AND CAUSES

The causes of the political movement in New York were the same as in Philadelphia. Like their brothers in Philadelphia the workingmen of New York protested against economic exploitation as well as against degraded citizenship. Yet they complained more often of political than of economic conditions. The lack of true democracy in political affairs, the greater consideration given in legislation to the interests of the rich than to those of the poor, the unequal representation of the "aristocratical" and of the "producing" classes, the dominance of the party and the party boss or party caucus — all these commonplace difficulties in the way of practical democracy were regarded with angry, hurt surprise by men to whom the doctrines of the Declaration of Independence were unquestionable, fundamental truth.

The trouble, the New York workingmen believed, was primarily due to inequitable legislation. Thus they contended that "the interests of the producing classes are the chief objects which should first engage the attention of a wise and

ruining their business. See Secrist, *The Anti-Auction Movement of 1828*, in *Annals of Wisconsin Academy*, XVII, No. 2.

prudent legislature," and complained that they had "seen with surprise and alarm, the neglect which these interests have received, and the greater consideration which has been bestowed upon the moneyed and aristocratical interests of this State." [2] This disregard of their interests they attributed to the fact that "candidates for public offices, especially for our representatives in the State legislature, have . . . been taken entirely from that class of citizens denominated, or supposed to be rich, or property holders, thereby leaving our own most numerous body without a voice in making those laws which we are compelled to obey." [3]

The old parties, they complained, had not properly represented the interests of the working classes. To the corruption of Tammany, indeed, the Working Men's party of New York City was said to have owed its origin.[4] And in the towns and villages of the State the high-handed methods of "juntas" and "combinations," and especially of the "Albany Regency" were the subject of bitter denunciation. The politicians, by fostering party spirit among the workingmen, were said to have kept them apart, destroyed their power to use the suffrage for their legitimate interests, and brought about their social and political degradation. In part, indeed, this was a revolt against party discipline, and especially against the caucus system of nomination, "by the aid of which a few intriguing politicians have virtually destroyed the right of suffrage." [5]

The remedy was believed to be for labour to form a party of its own. "Your fathers of the Revolution," declared the *Working Man's Advocate,* "secured to you a form of government which guarantees to you, almost universally, the elective franchise. . . . If you possess the rights of freemen, you have exercised them as the privileges of slaves. . . . Awake, then, from your slumbers; and insult not the memories of the heroes of '76, by exhibiting to the world, that what they risked their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honour to obtain, you do not think worth preserving." [6]

2 Proceedings of Workingmen of Auburn in *Mechanics' Press*, July 17, 1830.

3 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Jan. 16, 1830.

4 New York *Sentinel and Working Man's Advocate*, July 28, 1830.

5 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, July 14, 1830.

6 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Oct. 31, 1829.

Further resemblance to the Philadelphia movement is shown by the nature of the class alignments, especially with reference to the master workman. In the city the call for the first meeting to nominate candidates specified that the invitation was extended to "all those of our fellow citizens who live by their own labour, AND NONE OTHER." This was further emphasised at the meeting by resolutions declaring that "the aristocracy, or men nominated for their influence, are unfit to be legislators for the great mass of the people." [7] That this, however, did not include master workmen, or employers as such, is shown by a resolution passed at an adjourned meeting held on October 26, which said "that persons not living by some useful occupation, such as *bankers, brokers, rich men,* etc., not being invited here, be now respectfully invited to withdraw, and that five minutes be allowed for that purpose." [8] Later George Henry Evans stated that, when the workingmen's party was first started, an attempt was made to keep the leadership in the hands of journeymen and not to allow any "boss who employed a large number of hands" to take an active part.[9] Nevertheless, the ultimate object of the party was said to be "to assist in gradually and peaceably bringing about a state of things in which there shall be but one class, that of human beings; knowing no other inequality than that which nature has made." [10]

AGRARIANISM AND THE TEN-HOUR DAY

The first general meeting of the mechanics of New York was held on April 23, 1829, and was called for the purpose of opposing "all attempts to compel them to work more than ten hours a day." [11] Some large employers had intimated, it appears, that they intended to require from their journeymen an additional hour. The journeymen had already suffered from want of constant employment and believed that an increase in the number of hours would increase unemployment. They had at first thought of a "standout" but were dissuaded from this by Thomas Skidmore, a machinist by trade and a

7 *Ibid.*
8 *Ibid.*
9 Evans, "History of the Working Men's Party," Chap. i, in *The Radical*, January, 1842.
10 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, May 29, 1830; quoted from the New York *Daily Sentinel.*
11 *Morning Courier*, Apr. 23, 1829.

dialectician strongly under the influence of Thomas Paine, who suggested calling a meeting and submitting resolutions, not only on the ten-hour question but also on "the nature of the tenure by which all men hold title to their property." He argued that this would alarm "their aristocratic oppressors," who would give up the demand for eleven hours in order "to put a stop to any further discussion of so dangerous a question." [12]

A meeting of "mechanics and others" was accordingly held on April 23, and the following resolutions were adopted:

Resolved, that ten hours well and faithfully employed is as much as an employer ought to receive, or require, for a day's work; and that it is as much as any artisan, mechanic or labourer, ought to give.

Resolved, that all men hold their property by the consent of the great mass of the community, and by no other title; that a great portion of the latter hold no property at all; that in society they have given up what in a state of nature they would have equal right to with others; and that in lieu thereof, they have the right to an equal participation with others, through the means of their labour, of the enjoyments of a comfortable subsistence. Therefore,

Resolved, that if those in whose power it is to give employment, withhold such employment, or will only give it in such a manner as to exact excessive toil, and at a price which does not give a just return, such persons contravene the first law of society, and subject themselves to the displeasure of a just community.

Resolved, that we offer the foregoing as reasons to our fellow citizens for remonstrating against increasing the time long since in this city and elsewhere established, as being sufficient to perform a day's work; and that we trust it will meet with their approbation.

Resolved, that we will work for no employer who attempts to violate the rule already by long practice established, and found to be consistent with the best interests of both the employer and the employed. . . .[13]

This meeting was "numerously attended, considering the notice that had been given." But five days later, on April 28, another meeting was held which is said to have been "one of the largest public meetings ever held in New York." The

12 Evans, "History of the Working Men's Party," Chap. i, in *The Radical*, January, 1842.

13 *Morning Courier*, Apr. 25, 1829; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 146, 147.

number of persons present was estimated at 5,000 to 6,000; the room was crowded; and "the avenue and street were thronged with people unable to obtain admittance." [14] At this second meeting the mechanics again resolved not to labour "more than the just and reasonable time of ten hours a day"; provided for publication "in the public papers" of the names "of those who shall hereafter work more than ten hours a day, or require or receive it"; and appointed a Committee of Fifty "to devise the means of assisting those who may require it" and to call another meeting.[15]

So far as the protest against an increase in hours was concerned, the movement appears to have been entirely successful. The effort to lengthen the day's work was abandoned and was never again seriously attempted in New York. The Committee of Fifty, though appointed ostensibly to assist needy mechanics in the ten-hour fight, appears to have found little to do in that direction and turned its attention, under Skidmore's influence, to the formation of a political programme and plan of action.

Skidmore, whose programme soon came to be known as "agrarianism," probably from its resemblance to Paine's "Agrarian Justice," [16] was at that time engaged in writing a book which he entitled: *The Rights of Man to Property! Being a Proposition to make it Equal among the Adults of the Present Generation: and to Provide for its Equal Transmission to Every Individual of Each Succeeding Generation, on Arriving at the Age of Maturity.*[17] His main proposition was that the unequal appropriation of property caused all the evils of society, and that there should be an equal division so that all could begin over again on a basis of true equality. The plan [18] called for a state constitutional convention which should decree an abolition of all debts and all claims to property within the State. This property was then to be divided,

14 Evans, "History of the Working Men's Party," Chap. i, in *The Radical*, January, 1842.

15 *Morning Courier*, Apr. 30, 1829; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 147, 148.

16 *Agrarian Justice as Opposed to Agrarian Law and to Agrarian Monopoly* (London, 1797).

17 This book was copyrighted on Aug. 18, 1829, and was printed for the author by Alexander Ming, 106 Beekman St., New York. The ideas advanced may be traced back through Thomas Paine to Thomas Spence, who edited a periodical which he called *Pig's Meat* in England in 1794.

18 Skidmore, *The Rights of Man to Property*, 137–144.

according to an elaborate scheme, among all the adult citizens, "in order," said Skidmore, "that every citizen may enjoy in a state of society substantially the rights which belong to him in a state of nature." The proposal, as described by George Henry Evans,[19] editor of the *Working Man's Advocate,* was "that the titles of the present owners to the whole property of each state, real and personal, lands, houses, vessels, goods, and private property of every description, be at once invalidated; that the whole property of the state thus taken from those who now possess it, be put up at national auction; that the total estimated value of the same be divided into as many portions as there are adults in the state, and that one portion (in value) be credited to each, to which amount he or she shall be allowed to purchase at the state auction." [20]

Like the modern, "class-conscious" socialists, Skidmore made his appeal to the dispossessed.[21] The class division drawn by him was primarily between rich and poor, and seems only incidentally to have separated employers and employed. George Henry Evans, on the other hand, soon came to argue that it was impossible to make such a distinction and that the line should rather be drawn "between the *useful* and the *useless* classes — those who live by our vices, our follies, and our crimes; and those who administer to our bodily or mental necessities, comforts, and conveniences." [22]

The first purely political meeting was held on October 19, by call of the Committee of Fifty, which submitted a long report and a set of resolutions. The report,[23] which was said

19 George Henry Evans was born in England in 1806, in a family of the lower middle class. At the age of fourteen he emigrated to America with his father and his brother, Frederick William, the future Shaker, and soon became apprenticed to a printer at Ithaca, New York. Together with his brother he studied the writings of Thomas Paine and the other atheists of the day with the result that both became confirmed atheists. Frederick William, however, after a visit to the Shaker community at Mount Lebanon, New York, in 1830, abandoned atheism for the religious communism of the Shakers, and subsequently became the most prominent member of that body in America. (Evans, *Autobiography of a Shaker*, Mount Lebanon, N. Y., 1869, 10–30.) George Henry, on the other hand, remained an atheist for the rest of his life. In 1829, when he assumed the editorship of the New York *Working Man's Advocate*, he started on a life devoted to land reform. See I, 522 *et seq.*, for subsequent career as a land reformer.

20 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Aug. 7, 1830.

21 Skidmore even charged that Robert Dale Owen and Frances Wright rejected his agrarian ideas because they had "landed property" which they had "no idea of parcelling off into agrarian lots." *Ibid.*, July 14, 1830.

22 *Ibid.*, Apr. 24, 1830.

23 Published in *Ibid.*, Oct. 31, 1829; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 149–154.

to have been written by Skidmore himself,[24] made no reference to the ten-hour question but gave a fairly complete exposition of Skidmore's ideas as to the causes of poverty and mentioned, though it did not describe in detail, his remedy. It asserted that "all human society . . . is constructed radically wrong"; that "in the first foundation of government in this state the division of the soil should have been equal, *at least,* among families; and that provision should have been made (if property must descend in a family line) that it should descend in an equal manner, instead of having been placed at the disposal of the caprice of testators." To the lack of provision for equality of property in the soil all poverty and all class distinctions between rich and poor were attributed. The report therefore declared that, before the "great mass of the community" could be saved "from the evils under which they now suffer," a revolution must take place "such as shall leave behind it no trace of that government which has denied to every human being *an equal amount of property on arriving at the age of maturity,* and *previous* thereto, *equal food, clothing, and instruction at the public expense.*"

Following this meeting two others were held, on October 23 and October 26, and candidates were nominated.[25] The method of selecting candidates employed at this time, and afterwards severely criticised, was to place a considerable number of names in nomination and allow the Committee of Fifty to select from this number the names of 22 who were willing to be candidates and report them to a second meeting. At this second meeting these 22 names were placed on slips of paper, put in a box, and, after being well shaken up, were drawn out one by one until 11 candidates, the number needed to complete the Assembly ticket, had been selected. The ticket for Assembly thus nominated consisted of 2 machinists, 2 carpenters, 1 printer, 1 brass-founder, 1 whitesmith, 1 cooper, 1 painter, 1 grocer, and 1 physician. Four of the candidates were members of the Committee of Fifty,[26] including Thomas

24 Berrian, *Brief Sketch of the Origin and Rise of the Working Men's Party in the City of New York* (Washington, n.d.), 4–5; Owen, "Movements of the People," *Free Enquirer,* Mar. 20, 1830.

25 The proceedings of both these meetings were published in the New York *Working Man's Advocate,* Oct. 31, 1829.

26 *Ibid.,* Dec. 25, 1829.

Skidmore and Alexander Ming, Sr., Skidmore's chief supporter. Two candidates, one of them a Long Island farmer who was also on the so-called Masonic Hall ticket, were nominated for the State Senate. None of the assembly candidates, however, was on any ticket except that put up by the workingmen.

The campaign was short, for the election occurred but two weeks after the first meeting and one week after the nominations. But at least two important general meetings endorsed the new movement, and on the eve of the election the painters also held a meeting in aid of the ticket nominated by the mechanics and workingmen.[27] On October 31 the first number of the *Working Man's Advocate,* containing complete reports of the proceedings of all these meetings and editorials advocating the workingmen's ticket, was issued.[28] "The working classes," said the editor, "have taken the field, and never will they give up the contest till the power that oppresses them is annihilated."

Meanwhile four other tickets had been nominated, a Masonic, an Anti-Masonic, a Tammany Hall, and a so-called "Pewter Mug" or "Masonic Hall" ticket. Neither of the first two played an important part. The last was nominated by a disaffected faction from Tammany which called itself the National Republican party,[29] but was said by the Tammany organ to be "the old coalition party under a new name." Eight of the eleven candidates for Assembly on the National Republican or "Masonic Hall" ticket were also on the Tammany ticket, and, as has been seen, one of their candidates for the Senate was on the Working Men's ticket.

The campaign appears to have been as exciting as it was short. At any rate it attracted a great deal of attention in the public press. The agrarian doctrine was generally considered a plan for plundering the rich for the benefit of the poor,[30]

27 The call for this meeting, to be held on November 2, appeared in *Ibid.*, Oct. 31, 1829.

28 This number was evidently issued in haste to meet the immediate need of a public organ. The prospectus of the paper, instead of appearing beforehand, was printed in the first number with apologies, and an editorial announcement "To the Working Men" stated that this "first number of a paper designed solely to protect and advance your interests [is offered] for your approval or disapproval," and that "on your decision depends the appearance of the second." *Ibid.*

29 In reading contemporary political documents it must not be forgotten that the Tammany Braves also, at this period, called themselves Republicans.

30 *Ibid.*, Dec. 5, 1829.

and the connection with the party of Frances Wright [31] and Robert Dale Owen, [32] who were best known for their atheistic views, tended to cause additional public alarm. The workingmen's ticket was called by the Democrats an "Adams" ticket, by the Federalists a "Tammany Hall" ticket, and by both a "Fanny Wright" ticket. Numerically the movement was believed to be formidable. On the last of the three election days the *Courier and Enquirer,* the chief organ of Tammany, became almost hysterical in its alarm, denouncing the opposition papers for attacking the "old Democratic party" while "a party founded on the most alarming principles to civil society," was "sweeping every thing before it." [33]

In spite of all this excitement, or perhaps because of it, the workingmen elected one of their candidates for Assembly — Ebenezer Ford, a carpenter. Their candidate for the Senate who was on the "Masonic Hall" ticket was also elected. Thomas Skidmore and Alexander Ming, Sr., ran only about 25 votes behind Ford, and the entire ticket, with one exception, received over 6,000 out of a total of about 21,000 votes. The one exception was the physician, for whom only 4,787 votes were cast.[34] The "Masonic Hall" party secured the other ten places in the Assembly, a fact which the Tammany organ, the *Courier and Enquirer,* attributed to two causes, first, that "two thirds of the Adams party finally voted for the seceders," and second, that "3,000 old republicans, always regular nomination men, voted for a mechanics' or working men's

31 Frances Wright was a highly educated Scotch woman of independent means who had lived for some years in France as a member of Lafayette's household and had imbibed the ideas and the spirit of the French Revolution. She first came to this country in 1818 and on going back to Scotland published a book called *Views of Society and Manners in America.* Returning a few years later she landed at a southern port and discovered the blot upon American freedom — the slave system. For a time she devoted herself to an experiment in the farm colonisation and education of Negroes in Tennessee, but later became editor of the New Harmony *Gazette* which, with the assistance of her co-editor. Robert Dale Owen, she moved to New York and renamed the *Free Enquirer.* This paper became the organ of social and religious radicalism in this country. Frances Wright also gave public lectures of a strongly rationalistic character. She therefore became the butt of much bitterly hostile comment in the contemporary press. She is now, however, best known as the first advocate of woman's rights in this country. See *Memoir of Frances Wright.*

32 Robert Dale Owen was the eldest son of Robert Owen, theosophist and manufacturer-philanthropist, who originated the system of socialism known as Owenism. For an exposition of Owenism and the efforts to apply it in America, see I, 504, 549. Robert Dale Owens became a permanent resident in America and was later elected to Congress from Indiana. See Owen, *Threading My Way.*

33 *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer,* Nov. 4, 1829; *Doc. Hist.,* V, 155.

34 New York *Working Man's Advocate,* Nov. 7, 1829.

ticket of their own. Had it not been for this loss," said the editor, "there is no doubt that the whole of the ticket of the republican party would have succeeded by a handsome majority." Even as it was, the eight Tammany candidates who were also on the "Masonic Hall" ticket were elected, and the Tammany organ proclaimed that "democracy is yet triumphant, . . . regular nominations have sustained a most unequal contest, and come out of it with eight members out of the eleven." [35]

The workingmen were naturally much encouraged. "The result has proved," said their organ, "beyond our most sanguine expectations, favourable to our cause . . . the cause of the people. . . . In spite of the opposition of most of the city papers, and without *one* in our favour — in spite of the cries of 'infidelity,' 'the church in danger,' etc.— in spite of the immense *banking* influence, which was especially invoked when it was ascertained we had a prospect of success, we have at least six thousand votes, out of twenty-one thousand, while we had four other tickets to contend with. . . . We have done more than could reasonably have been expected, at this election. We have, to a certainty, paved the way to future victory. . . . If the Working Men's ticket had been nominated one week sooner, there is very little doubt that it would have succeeded." [36]

No sooner was this campaign over than preparations were begun for the next, and attention was at once called to the need for a more representative system for choosing candidates than the one followed before the last election. Early in November a meeting of "mechanics and other workingmen" adopted a resolution referring to the Committee of Fifty the task of reporting at a future meeting "a plan of organisation for the ensuing year." [37] From this time until December 29, when the committee made its report, the plan of organisation and the method of nomination were the principal subjects of discussion in the party.

Two plans were proposed, both for the selection of the central committee and for the nomination of candidates, namely, the

35 *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, Nov. 5, 1829.

36 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Nov. 7, 1829.

37 *Ibid.*, Nov. 7, 1829, and Jan. 16, 1830.

ward meeting plan and the general meeting plan. Evans favoured the ward plan,[38] but Skidmore urged that the organisation should be made as simple as possible, and that ward meetings were likely to be dominated by enemies of the workingmen.[39] From the first the Committee of Fifty favoured Skidmore's general meeting plan.

Soon, however, ward meetings began to be held which endorsed the ward plan of organisation and selected standing committees, with a membership of from 5 to 25, and with power to form a new general committee. Usually 25 were selected as a ward committee and this committee was authorised to select a delegation of 5 persons to represent the ward in the general committee. This course was first recommended on November 23 by a meeting in the Eleventh Ward of "respectable citizens, friendly to the cause of the mechanics and other workingmen."[40] A few days later, on November 26, the plan was endorsed by a meeting in the Eighth Ward, at which Ebenezer Ford, the newly elected workingman member of the Assembly, presided.[41] On December 19 a meeting of the committees of five from each of four wards elected Ebenezer Ford president and called upon the other wards to appoint delegates "to meet on Monday evening next, the 21st inst."[42] And later the Eighth Ward committee reported that they had been able "to associate with themselves delegates from eight other wards."[43]

This insurgent movement was based ostensibly on the question of organisation, but back of it was a revolt against the principles which had been thrust upon the party by the Committee of Fifty. Most of the workingmen were opposed to Skidmore's scheme for a division of property, but the opposition was itself split into two factions, the one led by Robert Dale Owen and George Henry Evans, and the other by Noah Cook, Henry G.

38 Evans, "History of the Working Men's Party," chap. iv, in *The Radical*, Apr., 1843; New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Nov. 21, 28, Dec. 5 and 26, 1829.

39 *Ibid.*, Nov. 28 and Dec. 5, 1829.

40 *Ibid.*, Nov. 28, 1829. This meeting also recommended that "each ward select one candidate for Assembly, Senate, Congress, or other office, and, when approved of by the general meeting of the citizens of all the wards, the proper number of each shall be taken by ballot." (*Ibid.*, Dec. 5, 1829.) There were 14 wards and only 11 members of the assembly.

41 *Ibid.* The Eighth Ward was the residence of Noah Cook and three other prominent leaders of the faction which was later supported by the *Evening Journal* — Henry G. Guyon, Stephen Harris, and Moses Hale.

42 *Ibid.*, Dec. 19, 1829.

43 *Ibid.*, Jan. 16, 1830.

Guyon, and others who both feared and hated Owen and his ideas.

Robert Dale Owen had from the first opposed Skidmore's idea, declaring that the resolutions endorsing agrarianism had been "crude, immaturely digested, and hastily passed,"— a fact which he interpreted to mean that the workingmen were in need of "enlightened friends to aid them by prudent suggestion." [44]

Evans, whose attitude upon this question is particularly interesting because of his later connection with the land reform movement, repudiated the scheme of a state auction at which all property should be divided, but was strongly attracted by the idea of a more equal distribution of the soil — an idea which he later developed into a demand for free homesteads as a method of distributing the public lands. "Agrarianism" to Evans appears to have meant, not Skidmore's scheme of "dividing up," which he vigorously opposed,[45] but a plan for the distribution of the public lands of this country roughly similar to that of the original Roman agrarians, which he defined as "the distribution among the Roman people of all the lands they had gained by conquest." [46]

On December 29, 1829, on call of the Committee of Fifty, a meeting was held, at which it was estimated that nearly 3,000 "mechanics and other workingmen" were present, "the room and passages exhibiting a perfect jam." [47] This meeting dissolved the Committee of Fifty, rejected its report,[48] and adopted instead the address, resolutions, and plan of organisation presented by the conference committee of the wards. The address and resolutions, according to George Henry Evans, had been prepared by the "Cook or anti-guardianship faction," [49] but "were scarcely listened to at the meeting, so great was the ex-

[44] *Ibid.*, Oct. 31, 1829; quoted from the *Commercial Advertiser*, Oct. 26, 1829.

[45] Evans specifically and repeatedly denied that the New York *Working Man's Advocate* had ever favoured an equal division of property. New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Aug. 4, 1830.

[46] *Ibid.*, Aug. 7, 1830.

[47] Evans, "History of the Working Men's Party," chap. iv, in *The Radical*, April, 1843.

[48] This report was said to have been adopted in the committee meeting, "by a vote of 6 to 5 — twelve members being present besides the chairman, one of whom was neutral." New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Dec. 19, 1829.

[49] This faction Evans characterised as "composed mainly of honest but fanatical and misguided spirits, led by Noah Cook and a few other unprincipled men, whose object was, by frittering away the Working Men's measures, to play into the hands of the aristocracy." Evans, "History of the Working Men's Party," chap. iv, in *The Radical*, April, 1843.

citement about the Plan of Organisation," which had been prepared by Evans himself.[50] Skidmore was present, but was prevented by the "vociferation" of the Cook faction, according to Evans, from addressing the meeting, in spite of the protests of several individuals, including Owen's associate, R. L. Jennings, who, though not "favourable to his views," were "desirous that he should have fair play." Yet "so averse seemed the body of mechanics to be even imagined at all favourable to his Agrarian views, that all attempts to obtain a hearing for him were in vain."[51] "We take this opportunity," said the address adopted at this meeting, "solemnly to aver, whatever may be said to the contrary, by ignorant or designing individuals, or biased presses, that we have no desire or intention of disturbing the rights of property in individuals, or the public." The resolutions also explicitly disavowed "all intentions to intermeddle with the rights of individuals, either as to property or religion."[52]

As a result of this meeting the advocates of agrarianism under Skidmore's leadership and calling themselves "the original working men," established a rival party. The friends of the ward system of organisation, according to Evans, had hoped that the minority would submit, as they themselves were prepared to do if outvoted, but the action of the Cook faction in endeavouring "to stifle discussion at the meeting" had made that impossible.[53] Early in January, therefore, Skidmore and a few of his friends called a meeting of "those and those only, who live by the labour of their hands." This meeting is said to have been "pretty numerously attended," but the account adds that "there was much noise and disturbance,— the Agrarian party say, caused by their opponents," and "no business was done."[54] Another meeting was held, however, on February 23, which is said to have been "attended by about *forty* indi-

50 The proceedings of this meeting, including the address, resolutions, and plan of organisation, were printed in pamphlet form and also in several contemporary papers, including the New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Jan. 16, 1830; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 157–164.

51 *Free Enquirer*, Mar. 20, 1830.

52 *Proceedings of a Meeting of Mechanics and Other Working Men*, Dec. 29, 1829 (New York, 1830, Pamphlet); *Doc. Hist.*, V, 157, 160.

53 Evans, "History of the Working Men's Party," chap. iv, in *The Radical*, April, 1843.

54 *Free Enquirer*, Mar. 20, 1830. This account was written by Robert Dale Owen, who was decidedly unfriendly to Skidmore and his doctrines.

viduals." At this meeting some thirty vacancies in the Committee of Fifty were filled.[55] During the spring Skidmore delivered a course of lectures at the Wooster Street Military Hall, [56] where the workingmen had held their two meetings on October 19 and December 29; and on April 21, 1830, there appeared the first number of a daily paper called the *Friend of Equal Rights,* the prospectus of which had been issued before the meeting of December 29 by Alexander Ming and Thomas Skidmore.[57]

Only a small minority of the Working Men's party ever actually endorsed with full understanding [58] the division of property idea which the political dreamer, Thomas Skidmore, endeavoured to foist upon them. Skidmore's radical proposal, moreover, as well as his domineering personal disposition, could not help creating for him numerous bitter enemies within the labour movement. Even leaving all personal grounds entirely out of consideration, this animosity is perfectly intelligible, for his attempt to inoculate the workingmen's party with a crude communism furnished the opponents of the labour movement during many coming decades with a telling catchword whereby to deprive it of a hearing before the public. Yet when he died in August, 1832, even his enemies felt impelled to recognise "his open candour; his independence of spirit"; and "his fearless contention for his own rights and the rights of the poor man." [59]

"STATE GUARDIANSHIP"

The secession of Skidmore and his followers proved a small loss numerically and in other ways a distinct gain. The meeting of December 29 had been eminently successful and the *Working Man's Advocate* announced that "it is now morally

55 *Ibid.* Quoted from the New York *Daily Sentinel* of February 26. "Few questions were asked," said this account, "regarding the candidates nominated, except, 'Is he a rich man?' which the meeting interpreted to mean, 'Is he a man who has laid by any property whatever?' If he was proved, or supposed to be possessed of any property, the meeting declared 'he wouldn't do'; if he was known or imagined to be totally without property, few other questions were asked regarding him."

56 New York *Working Man's Advocate,* Feb. 13, 1830.

57 *Free Enquirer,* Dec. 26, 1829; New York *Working Man's Advocate,* Feb. 13, 1830. The *Friend of Equal Rights* was a daily evening paper and was published at least as late as the end of July, 1830, and probably until after the election of that year. *Ibid.,* July 28, 1830.

58 Skidmore's book was not published until late in 1829 and its appearance seems to have been the signal for the workingmen to repudiate his ideas.

59 Quoted in *Free Enquirer,* Aug. 18, 1832, from the New York *Daily Sentinel.*

certain that the city will send an entire delegation to our next legislature who will advocate the principles which the working men contend for." [60] Shortly afterwards the conference committee dissolved,[61] and ward meetings were held to elect members of a new General Executive Committee.[62] On January 15 this new committee met and organised with forty-four members present; [63] and within a few weeks every ward in the city had elected its 5 representatives, forming a committee of 70 members, at least 50 of whom were mechanics, if not wage-earners.[64]

The General Executive Committee went energetically to work, held weekly meetings, and appointed subcommittees to report on the subjects of imprisonment for debt, the banking system, and education. Early in March a general meeting was held and various memorials to the legislature, prepared by the committee, were adopted.[65]

Upon the surface everything appeared to be moving along harmoniously. But soon it became evident that the party was still composed of two factions, both opposed to Skidmore and his agrarian doctrines, but also opposed to each other. The one advocated vigorously the so-called "state guardianship" system of education, while the other opposed as vigorously, both the idea and the people who proposed it. Henry G. Guyon, a leader of the anti-state-guardianship faction, had been elected chairman of the General Executive Committee, though not without a lively contest.

60 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Jan. 2, 1830.

61 *Ibid.*, Jan. 16, 1830.

62 Meetings were held in the Fourth, Fifth, Eighth, Ninth, Twelfth, and Fourteenth Wards, and probably in others, between the first and the middle of January. *Ibid.*, Jan. 9 and 16, 1830.

63 *Ibid.*, Jan. 16, 1830.

64 Skidmore said that nineteen of them were "rich men, and have no business there." (*Free Enquirer*, Mar. 20, 1830.) The New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Mar. 20, 1830, published the names and occupations of all the members "as taken from the roll of the committee." The occupations of 6 were not given; 5 were grocers; 2, merchant tailors; 1, an oil merchant; 1, a teacher; 1, a farmer; and 1, a broker. Noah Cook called himself merely a "working man," though the New York City directory of 1833 gave his occupation as "forwarding merchant." The remaining 41 members were distributed as follows: carpenters, 11; cabinet-makers, 4; black and white smiths, 4; masons, 3; painters, 3; boat-builders, 2; chair makers, 2; paper stainers, 2; brass-founders, 2; pianoforte makers, 2; and one each of the following — manufacturer of fancy goods, stoneware manufacturer, baker, silver plater, umbrella maker, window-blind maker, turner, portable-furnace maker, cartman, tailor, tin-plate worker, porter house keeper, ship-joiner, musical-instrument maker, sash maker, and morocco dresser. It was not stated whether they were journeymen or masters. The New York *Working Man's Advocate* asserted, however, that "if the occupations are given correctly by the individuals themselves, there is but one of the committee who is not a working man." This one was the broker.

65 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Mar. 13, 1830.

As has been seen, the demand for "equal food, clothing and instruction at the public expense" for children had been first made in the report of the Committee of Fifty at the October meeting. This idea did not originate with Skidmore, but with Robert Dale Owen, who had himself been educated at Hofwyl, Switzerland, in the school conducted by Emmanuel von Fellenberg, associate of Pestalozzi.[66] To this education he attributed his abiding faith in human virtue and social progress. And the failure at New Harmony had convinced him that his father had overlooked the importance of the anti-social habits which the members had formed before they joined — habits which could be prevented only by a rational system of education. His recollections of his experience at Hofwyl, together with these conclusions as to the causes of failure at New Harmony, led him to advocate a new system of education, which came to be called "state guardianship."

The demand for education as put forward by members of the Owen faction was, therefore, a demand for the establishment by the state of boarding schools where children should receive, not only equal instruction, but equal food and equal clothing at the public expense, under a system of "state guardianship." Day schools, they argued, were "utterly inefficient,"[67] and they therefore proposed to establish public boarding-schools along the lines of the Fellenberg School at Hofwyl. Under this system, they asserted, public schools would become, "not schools of charity, but the schools of the nation, to the support of which all contribute; and instead of being almost a disgrace, it would become an honour to have been educated there." An especial advantage urged was that, as children would be clothed and cared for at all times, the fact that poor parents could not afford to dress their children "as decently as their neighbours," would not prevent their attendance.[68]

66 See I, 226.

67 The report of the Public School Society, it was said, was "convincing proof that the day school system is utterly inefficient." New York *Working Man's Advocate*, May 1, 1830; quoted from the New York *Daily Sentinel*. Later the *Sentinel* said: "We admit that the common school system of New England is calculated to do good — that it *has* done good. But it cannot regenerate a nation; the proof is that it *has* not. . . . New England, any more than any other part of the Union, is not *practically democratic*. There, as elsewhere, the laborer belongs to the lower class, and the affluent idler to the higher class. . . . There, as elsewhere, one class produces, while another consumes." New York *Working Man's Advocate*, May 29, 1830.

68 *Ibid.*, May 1, 1830; quoted from the New York *Daily Sentinel*.

The Cook faction was bitterly opposed to this plan of education, and even before agrarianism was repudiated this second struggle for control of the party had begun. The action taken at the meeting of December 29 was interpreted by Owen as a revolt solely against Skidmore's agrarian doctrine.[69] But by the leaders of the Cook faction it was called a revolt, not only against the principles of Skidmore, but also against those of Owen,[70] and as the Cook faction prepared the address and resolutions, these documents seem to prove them right in their contention.[71] For not only was the agrarian doctrine completely repudiated but a general declaration in favour of education was substituted for the specific demand for equal food and equal clothing as well as equal instruction.

Each faction had a daily paper as its organ. The *Journal*, a daily evening paper which had begun to support the new party after the election of 1829, sided always with the Cook faction. But in December the prospectus of another paper to be called the *Daily Sentinel* was issued,[72] and on February 15, 1830, after many difficulties, the *Sentinel* finally appeared.[73] This new paper was from the first bitterly attacked by the *Evening Journal*.[74] Later the *Courier and Enquirer* asserted that the *Sentinel* had been established by the original founders of the party for the purpose of keeping their control and that it received "its principal contributions and editorial articles from Robert Dale Owen."[75] Meanwhile, the New York *Working Man's Advocate* under Evans' editorship was always friendly toward Owen's idea of "state guardianship."

Owen and his immediate followers furnished, indeed, the dynamic element in the movement. Already, prior to the election of 1829, Owen had organised an "Association for the Protection of Industry and for the Promotion of National Educa-

69 *Free Enquirer*, Mar. 20, 1830.

70 *Address of the Majority of the General Executive Committee of the Mechanics and Other Working Men of the City of New York.*

71 According to Evans, the address was long and "artfully framed to secure the support of the friends of general education," but "contained not a single allusion to the Land Monopoly." Evans, "History of the Working Men's Party," chap. iv, in *The Radical*, April, 1843.

72 *Free Enquirer*, Dec. 26, 1829.

73 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Feb. 20, 1830.

74 *Ibid.*, Dec. 26, 1829. Later the faction supported by the *Evening Journal* claimed that the *Sentinel* was "a mere tool of the Tammany faction, sent into our ranks purposely to betray us." *Address of the Majority of the General Executive Committee of the Mechanics and Other Working Men of the City of New York.*

75 *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, May 20, 1830.

tion," with the object of propagating his views and of going into politics for that purpose. After the Working Men's party had made its nominations, however, this society decided not to put up an independent ticket, but to endorse the workingmen's candidates. A little later the association adopted an "Address to the Public" and a "Memorial to the Legislature." The memorial, which was said to have been signed by upwards of 2,000 citizens,"[76] described in great detail the proposed plan by which the State should become "the guardian of all her children," and asked the legislature to appropriate $100,000 "towards the founding and endowment of a Model National School, somewhere in the centre of this State; such school to receive from each town and county a number of children proportioned to the population, and to support and educate these children either free of charge to the parents, else taxing each parent only in so moderate a yearly sum as shall not exclude even the poorest children from admission to its advantages."[77]

The next move made by the Association for the Protection of Industry and for the Promotion of National Education was to send to the different trade societies of the city a circular explaining its purposes and urging their rejection of the New England system of literary day schools and their adoption of the system of industrial schools under the state guardianship plan.[78]

This effort was not, however, eminently successful, partly because the name of Robert Dale Owen, whose anti-religious views had aroused bitter hostility, was attached to the communication. The New York Typographical Society, an organisation composed of both masters and journeymen, but which is said not to have contained a fifth of the persons engaged in the printing trade in the city,[79] replied through a committee that they considered the plan "entirely visionary"; that the "object, character and intentions" of their society were "entirely at variance" with the views of Robert Dale Owen; and that, though they were "workingmen," they hoped "to be always found labouring in better company than with those who would destroy the dearest of all social ties, and the hope of the

[76] *Mechanics' Press*, Mar. 13, 1830; quoted from the New York *Daily Sentinel*.
[77] New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Dec. 5, 1829.
[78] *Free Enquirer*, Dec. 19, 1829.
[79] New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Dec. 19, 1829.

great reward of the 'good and faithful servant.'" They admitted that there was "some distress among the labouring classes throughout the civilised world," but attributed it to "the rapid introduction of labour-saving machines, within the last thirty years." "Industry," they said, "is not unprotected, nor despised, nor deprived of its just reward; it is not true that there is no system of education in this republic befitting a republic. . . . What right has been invaded, suppressed, or molested? We know of none, excepting the natural right which a quiet, satisfied, intelligent and free community ought to exercise in silencing such mischief-makers." A large part of the reply of the printers, indeed, was devoted to denunciation of Robert Dale Owen and Frances Wright, who, they said, had left Scotland, "where thousands are daily groaning under the yoke of severe oppression" to proclaim themselves champions of "equal rights" in the "midst of a people enjoying liberty in its fullest extent, that liberty which was sealed by the blood of their fathers, and has descended to them in all its purity." "Your committee," they said, "view this interference with indignation, and in that spirit would reply; indignant, that the sanctity of a Society, established exclusively for the purposes of charity and the cultivation of good feelings among members of the same profession, should be broken into under such insolent pretensions; and indignant as freemen, that the institutions of our land should be falsified. . . . Our whole feelings relax into pity and contempt for these pretenders, when we see them hanging to the skirts of a deluded woman." [80]

This reply was adopted by the Typographical Society — but not unanimously. "Some of the *journeymen* who were present," said the *Working Man's Advocate,* "strongly protested against it at the time. Many others were opposed to it, but restrained from expressing their opinions (we speak advisedly) by fear of being thrown out of employ." [81] The minority afterwards issued a "Protest," in which they censured "the acrimonious spirit" pervading the committee's report, and expressed their belief that the benefits of education ought to be

80 New York *Mercury*, Dec. 16, 1829.
81 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Dec. 19, 1829.

more widely diffused and that the existing system was capable of improvement.[82]

In contrast with the printers, the painters' society endorsed the state guardianship plan of industrial education, criticised the insulting attitude of the Typographical Society towards Robert Dale Owen — with whose religious views, however, it expressed disagreement — and promised co-operation.[83]

All of this propaganda work was carried on, as has been said, not by the Working Men's party, but by an independent association which believed it could further its own ends by endorsing that party's nominations and by working within its ranks. As for the attitude of the party itself, the state guardianship system of education was no more an essential part of its programme than was the agrarian scheme. Before the meeting of December 29, at which agrarianism was repudiated, resolutions had been passed on the subject of education which did not specifically mention state guardianship.[84] The *Working Man's Advocate,* in its prospectus, declared itself merely "in favour of a system of education which shall be equally open to all, as in a real republic it should be."[85] And the address and resolutions adopted at the meeting of December 29, though demanding a system of education "that shall unite under the same roof the children of the poor man and the rich, the widow's charge and the orphan, where the road to distinction shall be superior industry, virtue and acquirements, without reference to descent," did not definitely ask for "equal food and equal clothing."[86]

The exact character of the system of education to be advocated by the Working Men's party was evidently left in doubt by these resolutions. And as soon as the subject began to be seriously discussed, differences of opinion developed. "Not daring," said the *Working Man's Advocate,* "to oppose openly a REPUBLICAN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION which shall afford the poorest man's child in this State equal *means* of instruction with the child of the richest, the enemies of our cause . . . endeavour

82 *Ibid.*

83 *Free Enquirer,* Jan. 9, 1830.

84 Meeting in the Eighth Ward, in New York *Working Man's Advocate,* Nov. 28, 1829.

85 *Ibid.,* Oct. 31, 1829.

86 *Proceedings of a Meeting of Mechanics and Other Working Men,* Dec. 29, 1829; *Doc. Hist.,* V, 157, 158, 161. Exactly the same resolution was passed several months later at a meeting in Brooklyn. New York *Working Man's Advocate,* Aug. 4, 1830.

to induce the working men to quarrel about the *details* of the proposed measure, before they have generally understood and agreed upon the principle itself." [87] But with as brilliant and as energetic a man as Robert Dale Owen urging, through a strong organisation, the adoption of a complete system of public boarding-schools in which children should be fed, clothed, and educated at the public expense, great interest was naturally developed in the details of the proposed measure.

After the reorganisation of the party in December, 1829, a sub-committee of seven was appointed on the subject of education. But nearly five months went by before anything was heard from this committee. Meanwhile, though the demand for equal food and clothing for children had been dropped in the general declaration of principles, the *Daily Sentinel* published a series of essays, said to have been from the pen of Robert Dale Owen,[88] which strongly urged the state guardianship system of education. These essays attracted wide attention and were reprinted in the *Working Man's Advocate,* the *Free Enquirer,* the *Evening Journal,* and other labour papers. The *Working Man's Advocate* especially recommended them to the consideration of the General Executive Committtee,[89] and the *Daily Sentinel,* though it professed willingness to open its columns to opposing views, came out squarely in favour of the state guardianship system.[90]

Meanwhile, ward meetings began to express themselves on the subject. In the Tenth and Fourth Wards, for example, the workingmen declared themselves favourable to state guardianship.[91] But in the Fifth Ward they merely advocated an " adequate " system of education.[92]

In spite of local expressions of opinion and in spite of the favourable attitude of the *Sentinel* and *Advocate,* it soon became evident that the majority of the workingmen were not in favour of public boarding-schools. But the opposition came from two different factions, the one composed of men who had a fanatical hatred of the scheme as a device for making " in-

87 *Ibid.*, May 22, 1830.
88 *Ibid.*, May 29, 1830.
89 *Ibid.*, Apr. 17, 1830.
90 Editorials quoted in *Mechanics' Free Press*, May 8, 1830, and in the New York *Working Man's Advocate*, May 1, 1830.
91 *Ibid.*, Apr. 8, 1830, and May 22, 1830.
92 *Ibid.*, May 15, 1830.

fidels" and the other composed of men who merely believed the plan premature and an unnecessary source of discord.

The principal objection raised to state guardianship was that under it parents would be forced to part with their children,—an argument which its advocates met by stating that parents would be allowed to send their children or not, as they liked, to the public boarding-schools. Other arguments were that parents who wished to educate their children themselves should not be compelled to pay their share of the taxes necessary for the support of a state system of education, and that, if the duty of supporting their children were taken from them, it would encourage young persons to marry at an "immature age, and impose on themselves the duties and responsibilities of parents without the slightest care or fore-thought." Even the advocates of the system were compelled to acknowledge that the latter argument had some weight and suggested in reply that the parents might be required to pay a small sum, say $5 yearly, toward the support of each child.[93] But the most telling accusation, an accusation largely fostered by the old party politicians and other opponents of the workingmen's party,[94] was that the state guardianship system was a scheme to establish a community of property like that which had been attempted at New Harmony.[95]

Two reports were finally presented to the General Executive Committee by the subcommittee on education, a minority report in favour of state guardianship, presented by one member, and a majority report consisting primarily of denunciation of the minority report. The member who signed the minority report, Mr. Grout, was a convert to the Wright-Owen plan and declared that on the decision as to state guardianship depended "whether aristocracy shall be perpetuated or destroyed; whether the poor man's child shall be educated or not; whether the next generation shall obtain their just rights or lose them."[96] The minority report was in substance merely a series of extracts from, and abridgments of, the essays on education already mentioned

93 *Ibid.*, Aug. 14, 1830.

94 See below, I, 277 *et seq.*

95 Quoted from the New York *Evening Post*, in New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Nov. 28, 1829.

96 The report was published in the New York *Sentinel* and New York *Working Man's Advocate*, June 19, 1830; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 165–174.

which had been published in the *Sentinel* and other papers and were said to have been written by Robert Dale Owen.

The majority of the subcommittee, on the other hand, after pronouncing the subjects of education "of greater importance than any other which is now agitating the public mind," reported that, though "convinced of the inadequacy of the present system, they have as yet seen no other that they believe to be perfect in all its parts." The remainder of their report was devoted mainly to an attack on the minority report as "a specious attempt insidiously to palm upon the committee and the great body of the working classes the doctrines of *infidelity*," and on "those journals, which, professing to advocate the cause of the working men, have undertaken to dictate to us a particular system of education." "If the committee," it said, "are allowed to proceed in their deliberations, without further encroachments, they are satisfied that in due time they will be enabled to prepare a report that will be satisfactory not only to the committee, but to the public generally." [97]

At the meeting of the General Executive Committee at which these two reports on education were presented only 47 of the 70 members were present, the minority report was not even read, and the vote stood 25 to 20 [98] in favour of the majority report. The "twenty-five" were said to have been "secretly drummed up" for the purpose, and notice of a motion to reconsider the vote at the next meeting was "entirely disregarded." [1] According to the *Working Man's Advocate*, "a few unprincipled politicians, having artfully prevailed upon some more honest members of the Committee to second their views, *unmasked* themselves." [2] The *Sentinel* and *Advocate*, indeed, later published an account of the entire proceedings under the title "History of the Unmasking."

The majority report was not adopted, however, without vigorous opposition,[3] and its opponents promptly issued a protest against the action of the "twenty-five" and a call for a public

97 Report of the majority of the Subcommittee on Education to the General Executive Committee, in New York *Working Man's Advocate*, May 29, 1830; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 174–177.

98 "History of the Unmasking," in New York *Working Man's Advocate*, May 29, 1830. The chairman did not vote and one member was neutral. *Ibid.*, May 22, 1830.

1 *Ibid.*, June 16, 1830.

2 *Ibid.*, May 29, 1830.

3 "History of the Unmasking," in *Ibid.*

meeting.[4] This document was signed by twenty-nine members of the Executive Committee. But the next day the *Evening Journal* published an article, signed by thirty-seven members, one of whom had previously signed the protest, in which the majority report on education was defended and the course pursued by the minority was condemned as "totally at variance with good order, and the rules and regulations of our association." At the same time the *Journal* published four certificates from persons who had signed the protest, disclaiming the call of the public meeting.

Before the day set there were posted throughout the city handbills containing the call of the meeting as originally issued by the signers of the protest for eight o'clock on the 26th, and also other handbills, apparently attributed by each faction to the other, calling a meeting of workingmen at the same place on the same day, but an hour earlier. On the eve of the meeting, therefore, the *Sentinel*, and evidently also the *Journal*, published notices stating that the meeting would begin at seven.

Promptly at 7 o'clock the meeting was called to order. Ebenezer Ford, who had returned from his duties as representative of the workingmen at Albany, and who was a member of the Owen or *Sentinel* faction, was elected chairman; and two secretaries were chosen from the same faction. Efforts were made by members of the Cook or *Journal* faction — the "twenty-five" — to adjourn, or to postpone the transaction of business until their partisans, who apparently were not expected in numbers until 8 o'clock, should appear. But the secretary read the call from the *Sentinel* and that from the *Journal*. Both were for seven o'clock. Resolutions were then handed in by Mr. Grout, the minority member of the sub-committee on education, and "were read amid repeated bursts of applause, and adopted with scarcely any opposition." These resolutions condemned the "twenty-five" for having denounced men instead of discussing measures, for having "in the bitter spirit of the most unjust persecution . . . denounced every independent journal

[4] This protest was first published in the New York *Daily Sentinel*, May 24, and was republished in the New York *Working Man's Advocate*, May 29, 1830, as part of the "History of the Unmasking" from the *Sentinel*.

in the nation which has dared to advocate a system of *Equal Republican Education,*" and for having violated one of the fundamental principles adopted at the December meeting by "intermeddling with the rights of individuals as to religion." The "twenty-five," a majority of whom, it was said, had been "opposed to us at the last election," were therefore declared to "have shown themselves to be inimical to the cause of the Working Men." Finally, "after waiting for some time, no further business coming before the meeting, a motion to adjourn was carried, and the chair was vacated."

Meanwhile, a crowd of from 3,000 to 5,000 persons is said to have collected in and around the hotel, "by far the greater number of [whom] were compelled to remain outside." No sooner had the meeting adjourned than the partisans of the "twenty-five" began shouting for Guyon, chairman of the General Executive Committee and a leader of their faction.[5] Immediately a struggle began for possession of the platform and of the room. Exactly what happened it is impossible to say. The *Courier and Enquirer,* as well as the *Sentinel,* claimed that Guyon, Noah Cook, and others of the "twenty-five" were ejected from the room; but the *Journal* asserted that both these papers had "told the public precisely what they *wished* to take place but what *did not* take place." "The gentlemen named," said the *Journal,* "were *not* 'ejected from the room,' and the editors of both papers know that they were not." The *Journal* also claimed that "the friends of order and of Mr. Guyon were at least 20 to one of the Agrarian faction and foreign radicals and fanatics. . . ."[6] In spite, indeed, of the assertion of the *Sentinel* that its partisans had "remained in quiet possession of the room till satisfied that no further attempt would be made by our opponents, to transact their business," the *Evening Journal* of Thursday published a set of resolutions which, it said, had been passed after "eight o'clock, the hour appointed," when "the agrarians were obliged to yield the chair to Henry Guyon, who was approved as the chairman by at least one thou-

5 "History of the Unmasking," in New York *Working Man's Advocate,* May 29, 1830, quoted from the New York *Daily Sentinel.* The *Free Enquirer* of June 5, 1830, also gave an account of the proceedings from May 21 to May 26, headed "Plots and Plotters," and signed "F. W." (Frances Wright).

6 Carey's *Select Excerpta,* XV, 264–266. This clipping, though not labelled, is evidently from the *Evening Journal.*

sand voices." These resolutions, it said, were "received by a cheering multitude." [7]

A long and bitter struggle ensued between the two factions of the Working Men's party, the Cook faction represented by the *Evening Journal* [8] and the Owen faction represented by the *Daily Sentinel* and *Working Man's Advocate.* The General Executive Committee was split in two, 41 of the original members supporting the 25 who had voted for the majority report on education, and 23 supporting the 20 who had voted against that report.[9] Each faction, however, soon began to hold ward meetings to recall the delegates to the General Executive Committee who had stood with the opposing faction and to elect others in their places. Soon, therefore, instead of two divided factions of a single committee, there were in functioning order two complete General Executive Committees of the Working Men's party, the one claiming to be the executive body of the "original" workingmen and the other calling itself the "Majority" or "the General Executive Committee opposed to Agrarianism and State Guardianship." [10]

Meanwhile, early in June a meeting of the so-called General Executive Committee was held, but a constable stood at the door with a list of the persons to be admitted and members of the Owen or *Sentinel* faction found themselves excluded.[11] At this meeting an address [12] was adopted in which the members of the committee who belonged to the Cook or *Journal* faction defended themselves for their action on the education question, denied that they were opposed to "a republican system of education," repudiated "agrarianism" and "infidelity," pronounced the charges that they were "Church and State" men and "political subservients" to be "base calumnies," and "solemnly" declared that they could "hereafter hold no political connexion with those of the Committee who still continue to advocate State Guardianship, or a Community System of Education, as paramount to all other considerations."

[7] New York *Working Man's Advocate*, May 29, 1830.

[8] Unfortunately no copies of the *Evening Journal* can now be discovered. Most of the information here given relative to the faction which it championed has therefore necessarily been drawn from the hostile New York *Daily Sentinel* and New York *Working Man's Advocate*.

[9] *Address of the Majority of the General Executive Committee, etc.*

[10] New York *Working Man's Advocate*, July 24, 1830.

[11] *Ibid.*, June 16, 1830.

[12] *Address of the Majority of the General Executive Committee, etc.*

Shortly afterwards a meeting of the Owen or *Sentinel* faction was called and "the Vigilance Committees of all the wards, and the citizens generally," were invited to attend.[13] The *Working Man's Advocate* especially commended this open policy and boasted that there was not a ward in the city in which their opponents could fairly meet them in a public meeting with the possible exception of the Sixth, which included the "'Five Points,' and the principal streets which partake of the character of that sink of iniquity."[14] The meeting was said to have been "crowded, orderly and unanimous."[15]

The address adopted at this meeting said nothing about state guardianship or about equal food and clothing but, without describing in detail any particular system, declared in general terms for tax-supported public schools. The Owen faction itself, indeed, appears to have seen that it had gone too far in laying down the details of the "equal, republican system of education" which it desired.[16] This address, therefore, merely accused the "twenty-five" of having "attempted to break down the Mechanics' and Working Men's Party, by open violations and flagrant transgressions of the rules and principles adopted on the 29th of December," spoke vigorously in favour of religious freedom, and formulated a statement of the other principles of the party, which did not differ materially from those adopted at the meeting of December 29. The principles adopted at that meeting were "again . . . publicly declared and avowed."[17]

The first test of the relative strength of the two factions came in the Fifth Ward, where a special election for alderman was held in July. The *Journal* faction nominated Anthony Lamb, who had been a candidate for assembly the previous fall on the Anti-Masonic ticket.[18] The *Sentinel* faction, declaring

13 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, June 19, 1830.

14 *Ibid.*

15 *Free Enquirer*, July 3, 1830.

16 The proceedings of a meeting in the Seventh Ward intimate that the essays on education published in the New York *Daily Sentinel* and other papers may "perhaps with too much zeal" have laid down "the minor details" of the system. (New York *Working Man's Advocate*, June 19, 1830.) And a meeting in the Eighth Ward considered it "unwise and inexpedient to enter so much into detail on this subject as to create dissension in our ranks." *Ibid.*, June 5, 1830.

17 *An Address of the General Executive Committee of the Mechanics and Other Working Men of the City of New York, read at a General Meeting of Working Men, held at the West Chester House, Bowery, June 21, and unanimously approved of.* Pamp. 1830.

18 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, June 30, 1830.

that its opponents had "assumed an authority to which they had no right," nominated William Leavens, a cabinetmaker.[19] The Tammany party also put up a candidate, and a triangular contest followed, in which the *Sentinel* faction claimed that Leavens was the candidate of the true Working Men's party, and that Lamb was a "coalition candidate," supported not only by the *Evening Journal* party, but by the Anti-Masons and the Federalists.[20]

On the eve of the election a "large and respectable meeting of the Mechanics and other Working Men of the Fifth Ward" endorsed Leavens;[21] but the other faction also, doubtless, had its meeting. And when the vote was counted it was found that Lamb was elected by 717 votes, as compared with 617 for the Tammany candidate, and 445 for Leavens, the candidate of the *Sentinel* faction. Nevertheless, though in this election the *Journal* faction, in its entangling alliance with other political elements, elected its candidate, the *Sentinel* faction showed greater strength than had been possessed by the united party in the previous fall.

The *Sentinel* faction probably did, as it claimed, contain most of the original members of the party, and the *Journal* faction was probably composed, for the most part, of men who had joined after the first campaign had demonstrated the strength of the new movement. This interpretation appears to be confirmed by the fact that, though the party organs on the one side — the *Sentinel, Working Man's Advocate,*[22] and *Free Enquirer* — had been founded, the first two for the express purpose of supporting the cause of the mechanics and workingmen, and the last as a radical, independent weekly, the chief party organs on the other side — the *Evening Journal* and also the *Morning Herald,* which had later endorsed the new movement — in the fall election of 1829 had supported tickets opposed to that of the workingmen.

19 *Ibid.*, July 3, 1830.
20 *Ibid.*, July 14, 1830.
21 *Ibid.*, July 14, 1830.
22 Soon after the split the New York *Working Man's Advocate* was consolidated with the New York *Daily Sentinel*, becoming the weekly edition of that paper under the title, New York *Sentinel and Working Man's Advocate.* (New York *Working Man's Advocate*, June 5, 1830.) From that time on the articles published in the *Advocate* were taken from the *Sentinel.* George Henry Evans, under the new arrangement, became one of the editors of the *Sentinel.* (*Ibid.*, Aug. 4, 1830.) In July the *Sentinel* boasted that its subscription list had increased every week since the month after its commencement. *Ibid.*, July 21, 1830.

In other parts of the State the "farmers, mechanics and workingmen"[23] appear to have sided almost universally with the *Journal* faction. The Executive Committee of the party in Troy early passed strong resolutions endorsing the action of the majority of the New York Committee,[24] and soon the Albany *Advocate,*[25] the Troy *Farmers' Register,*[26] the *Mechanics' Press,*[27] the Rochester *Examiner,*[28] and other papers had arrayed themselves upon the same side.[29] The only papers outside New York City which came out openly in support of the *Sentinel* faction appear to have been the *Mechanics' Free Press* of Philadelphia,[30] the Buffalo *Working Man's Bulletin,* and the Genesee *Republican,* the latter under the editorship of Orestes A. Brownson.[31]

Reconciliation between the two factions was rendered impossible, not only by essential differences in principle, but by personal animosities and by a fundamental difference in tactics regarding fusion with the old parties. The one faction considered the other a set of wild-eyed communists, infidels, free lovers, and general destructionists, while they in turn were believed by their opponents to be wolves in sheep's clothing, sent among the workingmen to divide and distract their movement for the benefit of aristocratic politicians.

THE STATE CAMPAIGN OF 1830

Organisations of "farmers, mechanics and workingmen" had meanwhile sprung up in many of the smaller towns of New York State. As early as February, 1830, the mechanics and workingmen of Albany held a preliminary meeting for the

23 See I, 260 *et seq.*

24 The resolution of the Troy Executive Committee, as published in the New York *Working Man's Advocate,* June 12, 1830, was as follows:

"Resolved, That we regard with unqualified approbation the conduct of the Executive Committee of New York, in preventing the insidious circulation of the visionary and wicked principles of Owen and his abettors, under the colors of the farmers, mechanics and working men, and thus protecting them from the odium of entertaining sentiments, and intending to prosecute objects which they abhor."

25 *Ibid.,* July 3 and 17, 1830.

26 *Ibid.,* June 16, 1830.

27 *Mechanics' Press,* July 17, 1830.

28 New York *Working Man's Advocate,* July 3, 1830.

29 Before September Noah Cook had evidently started a paper of his own called *The Reformer,* in which he claimed that his faction was supported by every workingman's paper in the State except one. *Mechanics' Free Press,* Sept. 14, 1830.

30 At first this paper advised "our friends in New York to forebear with each other a little while, and all will be well with them." *Ibid.,* May 29, 1830.

31 Brownson was a decided advocate of the "state guardianship" plan of education. Prospectus of the Genesee *Republican and Herald of Reform,* in New York *Working Man's Advocate,* July 17, 1830. See I, 494–496.

purpose of organisation and appointed a "general corresponding committee," [32] which immediately called ward meetings to appoint ward committees and delegates to a General Executive Committee.[33] By April the city was well organised and early in that month the "General Executive Committee of the Farmers, Mechanics and Working Men of the City of Albany" issued an "Address." This address was merely a general denunciation of the old parties and their methods; [34] but the objects of the organisation were clearly stated in the preamble and resolutions adopted at a meeting in the First Ward, and afterwards approved at meetings in all the other wards.[35] In this preamble and set of resolutions the workingmen declared their intention of withdrawing their support "from the present leaders of political parties," and of organising themselves into a new party to support their "individual rights without having any reference whatever to the dictation of former political partisans." [36]

Troy was little behind Albany. A meeting [37] on March 24, after passing various resolutions, appointed "a committee of correspondence" and also "a committee for calling meetings of the Farmers, Mechanics and Working Men of the city of Troy." This meeting also resolved to co-operate vigorously with "the farmers, mechanics and laborers" in other parts of the State and to urge "our brethren throughout this county and vicinity" to "avail themselves of the present opportunity to obtain their just rank and station in the community." [38] A little later an "Address" was issued "To the Journeymen Mechanics and other Young Workingmen of the County of Rensselaer." [39]

In Rochester, Utica, Syracuse, and other smaller places similar movements were soon started. On April 3, a meeting of "farmers, mechanics and workingmen" of Salina (Syracuse)

32 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Feb. 20, 1830.

33 Carey's *Select Excerpta*, XXIII, 32.

34 This address was published in the *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Apr. 3, 1830.

35 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Apr. 10, 1830.

36 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Apr. 3, 1830.

37 A meeting of "mechanics and other citizens" had been held in Troy in the fall of 1829, but its resolutions were in support of a bill "granting a lien to master builders, on buildings of their erection for payment of their contracts." *Mechanics' Press*, Nov. 28, 1829; quoted from the Troy *Republican*.

38 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Apr. 3, 1830.

39 *Ibid.*, Apr. 28, 1830.

nominated candidates for town offices.[40] Rochester fell in line with meetings of "farmers, mechanics and working men" on April 12 and 16, and "a meeting of six delegates of the working men, farmers and mechanics, from each town and ward of the county of Schenectady," was called for April 28.[41] The mechanics and workingmen of Utica had meanwhile nominated candidates for village offices.[42]

The results of the local elections in the spring of 1830 were decidedly encouraging to the workingmen. In Salina their entire ticket was elected by a majority of 174 votes;[43] in Troy their candidates were elected in every ward but one;[44] and in Albany they gained "a complete triumph"[45] in every ward but one. In two of the five wards in Albany there was no opposition, but in the others it was said that "every exertion was made which could be made to defeat them."[46] In the two wards in which there was no opposition they had nominated Democrats, and in the other two, where they were successful, some of their candidates, at least, appear to have belonged to the old Federalist group. It is probable, indeed, that all of these apparent victories resulted from practical fusion with other political elements. Nevertheless, the workingmen rejoiced in the "glorious result."[47]

By the end of May it was said that four cities in New York State — New York, Albany, Troy and Schenectady — were "awake to their true interests" and that "Rochester, Geneva, Syracuse, Ithaca, Auburn, Batavia, and numerous other important villages" were "arousing to action."[48] A little later a meeting was called in Brockport, near Rochester, for the purpose of organising a "Farmers', Mechanics' and Working Men's party." This call was said to have been signed "by some sixty or seventy individuals."[49] About the same time a "very nu-

40 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Apr. 17, 1830. Salina was an adjoining town which was annexed to Syracuse in 1847, when the latter became a city.

41 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Apr. 24, 1830; New York *Working Man's Advocate*, May 8, 1830.

42 *Mechanics' Press*, Apr. 24 and May 1, 1830.

43 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Apr. 24, 1830.

44 *Ibid.*, May 15, 1830.

45 *Ibid.*, May 29, 1830; quoted from the Harrisburg (Penn.) *Intelligencer*.

46 *Ibid.*, May 8, 1830; quoted from the Albany *Advertiser*.

47 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, May 5, 1830.

48 *Mechanics' Press*, May 29, 1830.

49 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, June 5, 1830.

merous meeting" was held of the "farmers, mechanics and other workingmen" of the town of Hartford, Washington County, and the "committee of correspondence" of that town proposed the calling of a county convention.[50] An election for village officers in Canandaigua on June 1 "resulted in the success of the workingmen's ticket, with the exception of one or two candidates, by a considerable majority."[51] Other towns in which meetings were held were Kingsbury,[52] Lansingburgh,[53] Glens' Falls,[54] Palmyra,[55] Brooklyn,[56] and probably Buffalo.[57]

Before time for the autumn campaign, organisations of farmers, mechanics, and workingmen who had declared their independence of the old political parties and their determination to enter the political field in their own interest were scattered over the State. These organisations furnished the foundation for the attempt at an independent State campaign, with candidates for governor and lieutenant-governor, which followed.

That the Working Men's party should hold a State convention and nominate candidates for State offices was first proposed by the New York *Daily Sentinel* in April, 1830. This proposal was immediately approved by the *Working Man's Advocate,* "not so much on account of the prospect of electing the . . . officers . . . as for the facility it would afford us of disseminating a correct knowledge of the principles upon which the working men have organised throughout the state." At the same time the editor of the *Advocate* urged that since, as it said, one of the most important principles of the party was "a reservation of the power of nominating our candidates for office in our own hands," the delegates to the convention "should be *expressly instructed,* by public meetings, whom to vote for."[58]

Before any action could be taken toward calling a state convention, however, a meeting of "farmers, mechanics and work-

50 *Ibid.*, June 19, 1830; *Mechanics' Press*, June 19, 1830.

51 Delaware *Free Press*, June 19, 1830.

52 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Aug. 7, 1830.

53 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Aug. 25, 1830.

54 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Aug. 11, 1830. A meeting was also held about this time in Salina.

55 *Ibid.*

56 *Ibid.*, July 27 and Aug. 4, 1830. John Commerford, afterwards prominent in the trade union movement, was secretary of the Brooklyn meeting.

57 No definite information has been secured as to meetings in Buffalo, but a paper called the *Working Man's Bulletin*, no copies of which appear to have been preserved, was published there.

58 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Apr. 17, 1830.

ingmen, and those friendly to their interests," held in the state capitol building at Albany on April 16, nominated for governor General Erastus Root,[59] a Tammany Democrat who had shown some signs of revolt against the organisation. This meeting also authorised the Albany Executive Committee to "adopt the necessary measures for carrying into operation the proceedings of this meeting," and directed it to correspond with similar bodies throughout the State to decide upon a candidate for lieutenant-governor.[60] This nomination of Root for governor, though later endorsed by a meeting of "friends of General Root" at the Broadway House in New York City, in which some of the leaders of the *Journal* faction took a prominent part,[61] was declared by the *Mechanics' Press*[62] of Utica "rather premature" and by the *Working Man's Advocate*[63] of New York "a matter of astonishment."

The action of the Albany workingmen appears to have stimulated the demand for a state convention to nominate candidates for governor and lieutenant-governor. General Root's friends confidently expected that such a convention would nominate him and many of them doubtless hoped that this nomination would help him to secure chief place on the regular Democratic ticket, while his opponents could not believe that a convention of mechanics and workingmen would head their ticket with an old party politician. By the first of May it was said that every workingman's paper in the State was in favour of a state convention.[64] In New York City both factions, though for different reasons, were anxious for such a convention, and the executive committee of the *Sentinel* faction recommended that it meet at "the village of Rochester" on the first Monday in September.[65] Shortly afterwards, however, the Executive Committee of the Farmers, Mechanics, and other Working Men of the cities of Albany and Troy called a state con-

59 General Root had been lieutenant-governor of the State and a member of Congress and was at that time a member of the state legislature.

60 *Mechanics' Press*, Apr. 24, 1830; quoted from the *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*.

61 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, June 30, 1830. This meeting did not propose an independent convention, but resolved to send delegates who would favour Root to the "Herkimer" or regular Democratic convention.

62 *Mechanics' Press*, Apr. 24, 1830.

63 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Apr. 24, 1830.

64 *Ibid.*, May 1, 1830.

65 *Address of the General Executive Committee of the City of New York, etc.*

vention to be held at Salina in August.[66] The other cities accepted this choice of place and time and preparations for the convention began immediately in many different localities, including New York City where both the *Sentinel*[67] and the *Journal*[68] factions held ward meetings and chose delegates.

This first state convention in which the workingmen of New York ever took part as a class met in the Court House at Salina on August 25, with 78 delegates from the 13 counties of New York, Albany, Rensselaer, Cayuga, Oneida, Washington, Onondaga, Tioga, Tompkins, Montgomery, Kings, Cortland, and Ontario. It was said that several other counties had chosen delegates who did not attend.[69] At the first session about 125 persons were reported to have been on the floor and 60 in the gallery.[70]

The first and apparently the most difficult business was the decision as to which of the two contesting delegations from the city of New York was to be seated. For this purpose a committee of canvassers was selected "from the country delegates." This committee reported in favour of the fourteen delegates elected by the *Journal* faction, upon which the *Sentinel* delegates "retired in a body."[71] The convention then proceeded to nominate General Erastus Root for governor and General Nathaniel Pitcher for lieutenant-governor. The nomination of Root was said to have been received "with reiterated bursts of applause."[72] Finally, after the adoption of an address and resolutions, the convention adjourned.

The address and resolutions adopted by the Salina convention were mainly devoted to denunciation of the Regency, to laudation of Root and Pitcher, and to protestations of loyalty to "republican" principles. Education and imprisonment for debt were the only specifically workingmen's measures mentioned in the resolutions, and the address shows clearly that, in the minds of its framers, the movement was primarily a revolt

66 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, July 28, 1830.
67 *Ibid.*, July 24, Aug. 11 and 14, 1830.
68 *Ibid.*, Aug. 4, 7, 11, 14 and 28, 1830.
69 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Sept. 1, 1830.
70 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Sept. 4, 1830.
71 *Ibid.*, Sept. 4, 1830.
72 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Sept. 1, 1830.

of Democrats against the element then in control of the Democratic party — the so-called "Regency." [73]

"The Working Men Betrayed" was the heading under which the *Working Man's Advocate* announced the result. For, said the *Advocate,* the convention had nominated "two decided party men . . . who never even *advocated,* publicly or privately, our leading measures, much less *pledged* themselves to support them." The nominations showed, intimated that paper, that the convention was composed of men who had "the *downfall* of the reigning aristocracy" more at heart than the "*rise* of the Working Men's cause." [74] The *Mechanics' Free Press* also expressed "surprise and regret" that the delegates to a workingmen's convention "should be so completely party ridden as to nominate such thorough going hacknied politicians as General Root and Nathaniel Pitcher." [75]

Yet in other quarters the rejection of the delegates sent by the *Sentinel* faction was hailed as evidence that the convention had repelled "with horror, the advances of the infidel or agrarian party." [76]

After the Salina convention the regular nominations of the Democratic party were made, and Root was defeated by a vote of 30 to 93 for Throop,[77] the acting governor, who had succeeded to the chair by reason of the resignation of Martin Van Buren to accept the post of Secretary of State under Jackson. A month later General Root, who had never formally accepted the workingmen's nomination, announced "that he did not consider himself a candidate for the office of governor." About the same time General Pitcher, the candidate for lieutenant-governor, also withdrew. Thus, little more than a fortnight before the election, and too late to make new nominations, the Salina convention workingmen were left without candidates.

Meanwhile, however, the *Sentinel* faction, declining to accept the candidates of the Salina convention, had nominated Ezekiel Williams, of Cayuga County, for governor and Isaac

73 Proceedings of the Working Men's State Convention at Salina, New York, in *Craftsman,* Sept. 4, 1830.

74 New York *Working Man's Advocate,* Sept. 4, 1830.

75 *Mechanics' Free Press,* Sept. 4, 1830.

76 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate,* Sept. 4, 1830; quoted from the Utica *Intelligencer.*

77 New York *Working Man's Advocate,* Sept. 11, 1830.

S. Smith, of Erie County, for lieutenant-governor.[78] These nominations were concurred in by a meeting, probably only of a small faction, held at the capitol in Albany.[79] Candidates for Congress were also nominated.

In the campaign of 1830 five parties were in the field, three of them claiming the title of Working Men. The *Journal* faction had a complete ticket in New York City, but not in the State, and the *Sentinel* faction had candidates for all city offices,[80] as well as for governor and lieutenant-governor. The agrarian faction also put up state and local tickets with Skidmore as one of the candidates for Congress; their nominee for governor declined, but otherwise they appear to have had candidates for all offices.[81] In addition to these three factions or parties of workingmen there were the Anti-Masons and the Democrats. But the former had no ticket in the city, where they probably voted for the candidates of the *Journal* faction. In the State, therefore, the contestants were the Anti-Masons, the Democrats, and the *Sentinel* and agrarian factions of the Working Men's party, while in the city they were Tammany and all three factions of the Working Men's party.

In other cities besides New York local tickets were put up. In Albany, for example, a county convention was held and candidates were nominated for the State Senate, for the Assembly, and for Congress.[82] An election for municipal officers had been held in Albany in September from which the workingmen, probably in league with other elements opposed to the Regency, came off even better than they had done in the spring. Their candidates for city constables were elected in every ward; in three wards they elected their entire ticket; and they secured 13 out of the 20 members of the board of aldermen, which, they said, "will give us a *Mayor* and a com-

78 *Ibid.*, Sept. 18, 1830. Ezekiel Williams was a leather manufacturer who had been president of the village of Auburn but was said not to be "hacknied in the trade of politics," and Isaac S. Smith was a Buffalo merchant. *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Oct. 27, 1830.

79 *Ibid.*, Oct. 27, 1830.

80 Of their three candidates for Congress, one was a grocer, one a sculptor, and the third was Thomas Herttell, who was a prominent advocate of the abolition of imprisonment for debt. Of the eleven candidates for Assembly and one for register, three were cabinetmakers, two carpenters, two ship masters, and one each of the following: paper colourer, printer, cartman, coppersmith, and grocer. New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Oct. 30, 1830.

81 *Ibid.*, Sept. 11, 1830; *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, Oct. 26, 1830.

82 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Oct. 9, 1830.

plete control over every measure proposed for the adoption of the corporation." [83]

The November election, both in the State and in the city of New York, resulted in a victory for the Regency in the one case and Tammany in the other,[84] i. e., for the Democratic party in both. According to Robert Dale Owen, "thousands of those who were the real friends of the Workingmen, seeing that the *Sentinel* ticket *could* not run in, sided with Tammany, to keep out the Tappan party. They preferred Tammany influence, with all its corruption, to Church and State influence." [85]

Throughout this campaign, Tammany, claiming credit for the enactment of the mechanics' lien law during the previous winter session of the legislature, and advocating the "return to specie money in place of paper rags," [86] flattered and courted the *Sentinel* faction of the Working Men's party, but that faction steadfastly declined to enter into any entangling alliances. When the result of the election was announced Tammany therefore rejoiced, not only that "agarianism in New York is now dead, gone, buried, and transported back to England where it originated"— through the loss by Skidmore of some 6,000 votes,— but also that "anti-Masonry and workeyism . . . have been utterly prostrated, together with all the unprincipled partisans of Clay." [87]

DISINTEGRATION

Though doubtless discouraged, the workingmen did not cease their exertions. In December a meeting of the *Sentinel* faction adopted a "Manifest of Principles"; and early in 1831 a general meeting adopted an "Address to the Working Men of the

[83] *Ibid.*, Sept. 29, 1830.

[84] The vote of New York City for state offices stood as follows: Throop (Democratic-Regency) for governor, 10,654; Granger (Anti-Masonic), 7,838; Williams (*Sentinel* faction, Working Men's party), 1,959; Agrarian party's candidate for lieutenant-governor, 118. Outside of the city the candidate of the *Sentinel* faction for governor received only 373 votes. The average vote for candidates for assembly in the city, disregarding two candidates who were on more than one ticket, was as follows: Tammany ticket, 10,551; Working Men's ticket (*Journal* faction), 7,313; Working Men's ticket (*Sentinel* faction), 2,220; Working Men's ticket (Agrarian), 131. One Tammany candidate was also nominated by the *Journal* faction of the workingmen or the so-called "coalition party," and one candidate of the *Sentinel* faction was also on the Agrarian or Skidmore ticket.

[85] *Free Enquirer*, Nov. 13, 1830.

[86] *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, Oct. 9, 1830.

[87] *Ibid.*, Nov. 8, 1830.

United States." [88] In the spring election Tammany was again victorious, but by a small majority; and the *Journal* faction, in its usual combination with the Anti-Masons and the remnants of the old Federal party, elected several of its candidates.[89] But by the fall of 1831 the *Journal* faction appears to have amalgamated completely with the so-called National Republicans and disappears as a Working Men's party. Both the *Sentinel* and agrarian factions were still in the field; but of the candidates of the former, 4 were also on the Tammany ticket and 5 on the National Republican ticket; and the average vote for those who were not on any other ticket was only 836. The agrarian vote [90] also fell to an average of 68.[91]

In the fall election of 1832 the *Sentinel* faction of the Working Men's party appears to have had the same candidates for governor and lieutenant-governor as in 1830, but had no candidates for Congress or for members of the Assembly. The *Working Man's Advocate* advised voting for the Tammany candidates for Congress on the ground that they were "all opposed to the United States Bank," and were "much more favorable to the measures of the working men than their opponents." For Assembly the *Advocate* called it "a choice of two evils," but at the same time pronounced "the ticket nominated at Tammany Hall to be far preferable to that nominated at Masonic Hall." [92]

By that time the presidential question and the United States Bank were the dominant issues. The workingmen of the *Sentinel* faction were in favour of Jackson for president and Johnson, of Kentucky, who had won their favour by his opposition to imprisonment for debt, for vice-president. But Jackson and Van Buren were nominated and, in spite of their opposition to the latter, they found themselves obliged either to "risk the

88 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Mar. 12, 1831.

89 *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, Apr. 15, 1831.

90 A pamphlet, entitled *Political Essays*, was published on Oct. 1, 1831, by "The New York Association for the Gratuitous Distribution of Discussions on Political Economy." It was announced that these essays would be published half-yearly, but only the one number, which was devoted to a discussion of Skidmore's agrarian doctrine and was undoubtedly written by Skidmore himself, seems to have appeared. In this number it was stated that this association intended "soon calling a public meeting of all men living on their own useful labour to form a ticket at the ensuing election." Fifteen thousand copies of this pamphlet were ordered printed and circulated; only one can now be located.

91 New York *American*, Nov. 18, 1831.

92 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Nov. 3, 1832.

election of Jackson by dividing the vote," or " vote for the only Jackson Electoral Ticket nominated." Under the circumstances the *Working Man's Advocate* advised voting for the Jackson-Van Buren ticket, but at the same time urged the workingmen to let " the party leaders know, by their votes for Governor and Lieutenant-Governor, that they disapprove of that system of nominations which has compelled them to vote for a candidate for Vice-President who is not the man of their choice." [93] Neverthless, by the fall of 1834 the *Working Man's Advocate* had gone over completely to Tammany,[94] and a year later it was carrying the name of Van Buren at the head of its editorial column as candidate for president of the United States.[95]

The New York movement, unlike that in Philadelphia, was broken primarily by internal dissension, and only secondarily by external opposition. Although dissensions were to be reckoned with also in Philadelphia they were not based on differences in principle and may therefore be attributed solely to intrigues by professional politicians, both in and outside the party. But in New York the issues raised were such that a legitimate division of opinion among the workingmen became inevitable. And this division of opinion, together with the radical character of the demands which caused it, made the movement even more vulnerable to attack than that of Philadelphia, both from the inside and from the outside. Yet the internal dissension was not entirely due to differences in principle. For a considerable number of the partisans of the *Journal* faction did not join the party until after the success in the 1829 election and, though in the nature of things a successful movement attracts adherents who would otherwise have remained indifferent, some of the new recruits were undoubtedly self-seeking politicians, who joined primarily with an eye to furthering personal political ambitions by playing into the hands of the old parties when an advantageous opportunity presented itself. Moreover, though the raising of the issues of agrarianism and state guardianship was sufficient to cause the cup of dissension to boil even without the assisting hand of the

93 *Ibid.*, Nov. 3, 1832.
94 *Ibid.*, Oct. 11, 1834. The *Daily Sentinel* was published at least until the spring of 1833. *Ibid.*, Mar. 9, 1833.
95 *Ibid.*, Nov. 21, 1835.

politician intriguing from within, and though due allowance should be made for *bona fide* and unstimulated prejudice on the part of the workingmen themselves, the fact remains that the opposition of the old parties was much greater in New York than in Philadelphia.

No small amount of excitement was caused, indeed, by the appearance of the workingmen in politics. On the floor of the New York Assembly one member described them as "factionists, more dangerous than any . . . in the days of the French revolution." [96] And the hostile press invented a long list of names for the new party,—"Skidmore and Ming Agrarians," "Wright Reasoners," "Levelers," "Sovereigns," "Workies," "Mob," "Rabble," "Anti-Masons and Federalists in Disguise," "Dirty Shirt Party," [97] "tag, rag, and bobtail," and "ring-streaked and speckled rabble." [98] Two or three papers even made the rise of the new party an excuse for attacks on universal suffrage.[99]

Violent denunciation was common and was directed, not only against the "agrarian" doctrines which the workingmen repudiated, but also against the "infidel" doctrines which they never in any way endorsed. The address and resolutions adopted at the first political meeting in October, 1829, however, had laid them liable to the charge of "agrarianism," and long after they had officially repudiated Skidmore's scheme and he had formed an independent party of his own this charge was hurled against them. The partisan press, indeed, seems to have endeavoured to make it appear that this doctrine was the corner-stone of the new party. After the meeting of December 29, 1829, for example, and at the very time that Skidmore was busy forming his new party, the *Courier and Enquirer* spoke of "the managers behind the scenes, Tom Skidmore and his associates." [1] A month later this paper headed its account of the North American Hotel meeting, which denounced Skidmore and his ideas almost as bitterly as the *Courier and Enquirer* itself, with the single word —"Skidmoriana." [2]

96 *Ibid.*, Mar. 13, 1830.

97 *Ibid.*, June 5, 1830; quoted from an article in the *Wayne County Patriot.*

98 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, May 19, 1830.

99 *Ibid.*, Nov. 7, 1829; quoted from the *Commercial Advertiser;* New York *Journal of Commerce*, Nov. 7, 1829; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 154.

1 *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, Feb. 13, 1830.

2 *Ibid.*, Mar. 11, 1830.

The charge of infidelity, though resting upon an even less substantial basis, figured no less prominently than that of agrarianism. Yet the only excuse for it was the fact that Robert Dale Owen had happened to be secretary of one of the workingmen's meetings and that the party was supported by him any by his fellow-editor, Frances Wright, in the *Free Enquirer,* which was primarily a free-thought publication.

From the first the element in the party which was tinged with the Wright-Owen religious ideas made every effort to "keep religion and politics entirely distinct." Division along religious lines, the editor of the *Working Man's Advocate* pointed out, was precisely what their enemies were endeavouring to effect. These subjects, he said, "ought never to be broached in a political meeting." [3] Again and again the *Advocate* disclaimed all connection "with those who would mix religion or irreligion with politics. It is the only rock on which we can split, and we are determined to use all possible exertions to steer clear of it." [4] Resolutions denouncing attempts to introduce religion into the workingmen's meetings were also frequently passed.[5]

From the modern point of view it is difficult to see why the avoidance of religious topics was so difficult. But while at that time religious freedom had been established as between different denominations, the most violent prejudice existed against speculative opinions which denied the truth of any religion. The *Commercial Advertiser,* for example, spoke of the workingmen as "poor and deluded followers of a crazy atheistical woman"; and proceeded:

"Lost to society, to earth and to heaven, godless and hopeless, clothed and fed by stealing and blasphemy . . . such are the apostles who are trying to induce a number of able bodied men in this city to follow in their own course . . . to disturb the peace of the community for a time; go to prison and have the mark of Cain impressed upon them; betake themselves to incest, robbery, and murder; die like ravenous wild beasts, hunted down without pity; and go to render their account before God, whose existence they believed in their miserable hearts, even while they were blaspheming him in

3 New York *Working Man's Advocate,* Dec. 5, 1829. The same issue of the *Advocate* spoke of "enemies in the camp" in the Ninth Ward.

4 *Ibid.*, June 12, 1830.

5 *Ibid.*, Jan. 16, 1830, May 15, Aug. 4 and 11, 1830.

their ignorant, snivelling, and puerile speculations. Such is too true a picture in *all* its parts of some of the leaders of the new political party, which is emerging from the slime of this community, and which is more beastly and terrible than the Egyptian Typhon." [6]

After the meeting of December 29, 1829, the *Courier and Enquirer* announced that "during the last few weeks the leading mechanics" had been "employed in devising measures to put down the anti-property and infidel faction, which had previously obtained a controlling influence in all their public and private proceedings." To this the editor of the *Working Man's Advocate* replied that "no such faction existed but in the distempered imagination of the editors of the *Courier and Enquirer,* and other aristocratic party editors." "These gentry," he said, "have grown fat by keeping alive party dissensions, and it was not surprising that, when the people had determined to unite to transact their own business in their own way, they should endeavour to create confusion among them, in their first movements, by denouncing them as anti-property men and infidels; but now, finding their efforts have been defeated, and their own darling *factions* fast falling to oblivion, they attempt to make a merit of having denounced the creature of their own invention." [7] "The cries of Infidelity and Agrarianism," later declared the *Working Man's Advocate,* "are mere political scare-crows, such as were formerly set up to terrify the democrats of 1801." [8]

In other parts of the State, moreover, both "agrarianism" and "infidelity" were universally repudiated.[9]

Nevertheless, the split which occurred in May, 1830, was directly caused by religious controversy for which each faction held the other responsible. The *Journal* faction claimed that the *Sentinel* faction had introduced the subject through its "state guardianship" plan of education [10] which was a plan, they said, "first intended to get the children into public schools,

6 *Ibid.*, Nov. 7, 1829; quoted from the *Commercial Advertiser.*

7 *Ibid.*, Jan. 9, 1830.

8 *Ibid.*, June 16, 1830.

9 "If infidelity can be charged to the Workingmen, it must be done in the city of New York alone; for, out of it, there is not the *least* appearance of truth in the assertion." *Mechanics' Press,* July 17, 1830.

10 New York *Working Man's Advocate,* Aug. 4, 1830. Apparently the only basis for this accusation was that the essays on education, on which the minority report of the subcommittee was founded, were written by Robert Dale Owen.

and then teach them infidelity." The *Sentinel* faction, on the other hand, claimed that the *Journal* faction had first introduced the subject in the report of the majority of the subcommittee on education.

Wherever the responsibility lay for the introduction of these subjects, the general denunciation of the principles of the workingmen as "anarchical," [11] "agrarian," and "infidel" doubtless had a strong influence over the fate of the movement. Even the workingmen at one time acknowledged "that the efforts of the puppets of the aristocracy to misrepresent and defame our principles, have been but too successful with the careless and the unthinking." [12] And according to one contemporary writer the Working Men's party was broken up by professional men, who succeeded in condemning its members as disciples of Owen, Wright, and Skidmore.[13]

POLITICAL ISSUES

With the exception of Skidmore's proposal for an "equal division" of property, and Owen's demand that public education should take the form of "state guardianship," the specific issues were similar to those in Philadelphia. As has been seen, agrarianism was early repudiated by all but a small seceding faction, and "state guardianship" later caused a second split in which it was rejected by a majority of the party. Nevertheless, from first to last the most prominent demand of all factions and branches of the Working Men's party of New York was for public education of some kind.

The other demands put forward before the first split were reform in the banking system and in the auction system, a mechanics' lien law, the abolition of imprisonment for debt, a general ticket system of election for the State Assembly and other offices, and the abolition of the exemption of church property from taxation. Of these issues, all accept the exemption of church property from taxation were of permanent importance in the party. When the division of property was dropped the issues

11 This accusation was first made by the *Commercial Advertiser* on Oct. 23, 1829, in an editorial; quoted in the New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Oct. 31, 1829.

12 Resolution passed at a meeting in the Fifth Ward, in New York *Working Man's Advocate*, May 15, 1830.

13 The *Co-operator*, Nov. 3, 1832.

were not otherwise materially changed, but several new demands were brought forward, the most important of which were reform in the militia system and in legal procedure, adequate fees for jurors and witnesses, civil service reform, and the abolition of bonds for elective offices. After the second split in May, 1830, though the smaller faction at that time definitely introduced its "state guardianship" proposal and added demands for "inviolable religious freedom" and the abolition of capital punishment, both wings of the party claimed to be strictly following out the programme adopted immediately after the repudiation of agrarianism.

The "Working Men's Measures" placed at the head of the editorial column of the *Working Man's Advocate,* the organ of the "state guardianship" faction, in the autumn of 1830, were "Equal universal education, abolishment of imprisonment for debt, abolition of all licensed monopolies, an entire revision or abolition of the present militia system, a less expensive law system, equal taxation of property, an effective lien law for labourers on buildings, a district system of elections, no legislation on religion." [14] Two years later the *Advocate* was still displaying the same list of measures with one addition, "abolition of capital punishment,"— and a footnote stating that the abolition of imprisonment for debt had been first advocated by the workingmen of New York in 1829, and had been accomplished in that State in 1831.[15] At the same time the *Advocate* was attacking the lottery system.

The demands put forward in other parts of the State, where the farmers organised in connection with the mechanics and workingmen, were somewhat different from, though roughly similar to, those in the city of New York. "Agrarianism" and the "state guardianship" system of education were universally condemned, but the subject of public education usually stood at the head of the list of issues. The abolition of monopolies was generally demanded, but less emphasis was placed upon the evils of banking than in the city, and the auction system, which was a local, city issue, was rarely mentioned. Throughout the State the party demanded a mechanics' lien

[14] New York *Working Man's Advocate,* Oct. 30, 1830. Among monopolies were included bank charters and auction licenses.

[15] *Ibid.,* Nov. 24, 1832.

law, the abolition of imprisonment for debt, a district system of elections, the abolition of militia training, a "reform in the administration of public justice," and adequate fees for jurors and witnesses. Other demands brought forward in different places in the State were for the abolition of prison labour, equal taxation, tariff reform, pensions for Revolutionary veterans, "the reduction of perquisites and salaries of public officers to a fair equivalent for services rendered," "the election of all officers of government immediately by the people, in all practicable cases," and the privilege of any citizen "to publish any portion of the Revised Statutes."

In the resolutions adopted by the state convention, the specific demands were only for a more universal system of education, the abolition of imprisonment for debt, and pensions for Revolutionary soldiers. These resolutions also denounced the attempt to place a direct tax upon the landed interests and to remove the state tax on the banks of New York City. Other subjects mentioned in the address of the state convention were the militia system, "the better pay of jurors, the reduction of fees and perquisites of office holders, and the abolishment of all places now created and disposed of to reward the followers of an unprincipled and arrogant aristocratical faction." [16]

Banks were condemned by the workingmen of New York as "exclusive privileges" and bankers as "the greatest knaves, imposters and paupers of the age . . . who swear they have promised to pay to their debtors thirty or thirty-five millions of dollars ON DEMAND, at the same time that they have, as they also swear, only three, four, or five millions to do it with." The workingmen complained that there were in circulation "more than a thousand kinds of counterfeit bank notes, from five hundred dollars down to a single dollar," and declared that "more than one hundred broken banks, within a few years past, admonish the country to destroy banks altogether." [17] The banks, they said, "under the administration of their present directors and officers, and by the concert of auctioneers and foreigners, aided by custom house credits, form a monopoly that is hostile to the equal rights of the American merchant, manu-

16 *Craftsman*, Sept. 4, 1830.
17 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Oct. 31, 1829; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 151, 152

facturer, mechanic, and laboring man; and . . . the renewal, by the legislature, of the charters prayed for, will confirm and perpetuate an aristocracy, which, eventually, may shake the foundations of our liberties, and entail slavery on our posterity." [18]

Though at first demanding that banks be prohibited altogether, the workingmen later asked only that the legislature refuse to renew existing charters, that the system be reorganised upon a sounder and more democratic basis, and finally that the circulation of notes of less than $5 or $10 be prohibited. If the effort to abolish the system should fail, they suggested that the banks be compelled "at short and stated periods, to pay over to the state treasury, (and that, too, in nothing but gold or silver), for the benefit of public education and other public uses, all the interest they receive on loans they make over and above their specie capital actually paid in. Under this arrangement," said the workingmen, "if, as now, they [the banks] draw out of the community two millions of dollars, annually, as interest on their paper emissions, they will pay it back again to the public authority, and thus, in part, undo the mischief they have done." The new party also proposed to prohibit the banks from issuing small notes; and highly commended the system said to be in vogue in some parts of Holland, under which the directors of all banks were chosen by the public authority instead of by the stockholders.[19]

On this subject little evidence exists of any difference of opinion, either between the two factions in New York City or between the workingmen of the city and of other places in the State. One of the objects for which the mechanics and workingmen of Albany organised, according to their "corresponding committee," was "to abolish all monopolies," [20] but banks were not specifically mentioned, and later this demand was modified to "the restriction, if not the gradual abolition, of all licensed monopolies." [21] But that banks were undoubtedly included under monopolies is shown by the complaint that "at present the laboring classes create the wealth which the bankers and

18 *Proceedings of a Meeting of Mechanics and Other Working Men*, Dec. 29, 1829; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 162.

19 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Oct. 31, 1829.

20 Carey's *Select Excerpta*, XXIII, 32.

21 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Dec. 29, 1830.

speculators pocket." [22] Banks, moreover, were denounced as monopolies by the workingmen of Auburn,[23] Saratoga,[24] Lansingburgh,[25] and Brooklyn.[26]

Closely associated with banks as "licensed monopolies" were auctions, an evil apparently existing only in New York City and against which the merchants and mechanics of that city had combined in a vigorous campaign in the fall of 1828.[27] Though journeymen had taken little part in that year they were quite as much opposed to the system as were their masters. How the interests of the master mechanic, and also those of the journeymen, suffered through the ascendency of the auctioneer was well brought out in the arguments used during that campaign. By this time the auctioneer, instead of being only an importer of foreign goods and thus a dangerous competitor, seems to have extended his control also directly over the master mechanic. The effects of his control were characterised as follows: "He has despoiled you of your hard earned profits, and will smile at the contemplation of your ruin, as long as you sit quiet and seek no means of redress. Worthless deceptive articles must now be made, in lieu of those which were formerly substantial and creditable to you — and for whom? certainly not for your customers, they have long since fled. The Auctioneers are the only medium between you and the consumer, and for their special accommodation you must deduct from five to ten per cent. from the amount of the sales which is just so much out of your pockets." [28]

Four of the resolutions passed by the workingmen on October 19, 1829, were directed against the auction system and the excessive profits of the auctioneers, who were classed with bankers as "monopolists." [29] At the December meeting, too, great emphasis was placed upon the connection between the auctioneers and the banks. "According to their own returns," said the address adopted at that meeting, "about twenty millions of

22 Address adopted at the Albany meeting which endorsed the candidates for state offices nominated by the *Sentinel* faction in New York City, in *Ibid.*, Oct. 27, 1830.

23 *Mechanics' Press*, June 12 and 17, 1830.

24 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Aug. 21, 1830.

25 *Ibid.*, Aug. 25, 1830.

26 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Aug. 4, 1830.

27 Secrist, *The Anti-Auction Movement of 1828*, in *Annals of Wisconsin Academy*, XVII, No. 2.

28 *The Anti-Auctioneer*, Nov. 1, 1828.

29 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Oct. 31, 1829; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 152, 153.

foreign goods, and from the least estimate, about ten millions in value of domestic goods, are annually sold under the hammer; and the bulk of these enormous sales is made by six or seven individuals, every one of whom, it is believed, is a director in some of the banks. So situated, they are enabled to wield an immense monied power, and force through their own hands most of the business of the city." Moreover, "by an alliance with the importer," declared this address, "the auctioneer avails himself of millions through the custom house. The unpaid bonds given for custom house duties, in this city alone, average at all times fifteen millions of dollars. . . . Fifteen millions of capital is, in reality, drawn and kept out of the pockets of the producing classes, and put into those of the importers and auctioneers, but chiefly the latter. As far as the importer comes in for a share, it is directly used to the injury of the producing classes of our citizens. It is employed by foreigners (for they are our importers), to bring foreign fabrics into our country, to undersell our manufacturers and mechanics, and thereby reduce the price of our fabrics, and, of consequence, our labour. It is intended to bear directly on our own working people, by inducing their customers to purchase foreign commodities instead of domestic. . . . Just so far as the imported articles supersede such as we can conveniently make, it tends to sink the price of our labour, and depress the working classes of our community."

The remedy proposed was not abolition but regulation. "Heavy duties," suggested the workingmen, "may be imposed on sales at auction, which in time may be lessened, and the business of selling eventually thrown open to all." That Congress abolish the system of credits extended to importers and require that all duties be paid in cash was also asked.[30]

Another demand put forward from the beginning of the movement was for a mechanics' lien law. As early as October 19, 1829, the workingmen complained that owing to the lack of "a lien law on buildings," "not less than three or four hundred thousand dollars are annually plundered from the useful and industrious classes of our citizens."[31] They therefore demanded

30 *Proceedings of a Meeting of Mechanics and Other Working Men*, Dec. 29, 1829; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 161, 162.

31 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Oct. 31, 1829; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 153. On another occasion, however, the working-

"a lien law for the security of every individual who shall furnish either labor or materials towards the erection, completion, or necessary repairs of any building." [32]

On the need for a mechanics' lien law all factions were united and the resolutions of the workingmen of New York City were said to have been "followed up and echoed from almost every chartered village of any magnitude in the state." [33] In Albany this issue was particularly prominent,[34] and was accompanied by a demand for "the exemption from sale or seizure, by execution or otherwise, of all tools, working implements and utensils actually necessary for the mechanic, workingman, and the farmer, to carry on their business." [35] The lack of a mechanics' lien law was also complained of by the farmers, mechanics, and workingmen of Troy,[36] by the *Mechanics' Press* of Utica,[37] by the address of the Executive Committee of Albany and Troy to the State at large,[38] and by the farmers, mechanics, and workingmen of Brooklyn [39] and of Saratoga.[40]

In response to this wide-spread demand a mechanics' lien bill was introduced in the New York State Legislature early in 1830 by the Democratic party. But the *Working Man's Advocate* referred to this bill as "the bait held out to the workingmen — the farce of a lien law — to induce them to return to the ranks of the Tammany party, which was neglected when it was found they would not bite." [41] And early in April the workingmen stated that they had learned "with feelings of deep regret, the fate of our lien law, . . . the inefficient and complicated form it assumed in the house . . . its final death in the senate." [42] The bill which was passed before the end of the session was not considered by the workingmen as satisfying their

men estimated the annual loss to mechanics, labourers, and furnishers of materials for buildings, as only $125,000. To these losses the mechanics attributed a large part of the distress during the winter of 1828–1829. *Proceedings of a Meeting of Mechanics and Other Working Men*, Dec. 29, 1829; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 159.

32 *Ibid.*, Dec. 29, 1829; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 158–161.

33 *Mechanics' Press*, Apr. 3, 1830.

34 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Feb. 20, 1830; Carey's *Select Excerpta*, XXIII, 32; *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Apr. 3, Oct. 9, Oct. 27, and Dec. 29, 1830.

35 Carey's *Select Excerpta*, XXIII, 32.

36 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Apr. 3, 1830; New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Apr. 24, 1830.

37 *Mechanics' Press*, Apr. 3, 1830.

38 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, July 28, 1830.

39 *Ibid.*, Aug. 4, 1830.

40 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Aug. 21, 1830.

41 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Mar. 13, 1830.

42 Resolutions passed by a meeting in the Tenth Ward, in *Ibid.*, Apr. 3, 1830.

demand, and as long as the party existed one of its principal complaints was the lack of an adequate mechanics' lien law.

Another demand for preferential legislation was for the abolition of imprisonment for debt. The question first came up at the October meeting, but in the address and resolutions adopted at the meeting of December 29 it became the first specific demand. "Imprisonment for debt," said the address, "we believe to be a remnant of the feudal system, calculated only for barbarians, disgraceful to the age and country in which we live, depriving individuals of the only means of being serviceable to themselves, their families, or the public."[43] The workingmen also condemned at this meeting a measure recently adopted to restrict the jail limits, or the limits within which condemned debtors were allowed to live when out on bail in New York City, on the ground that it would raise rents in the circumscribed district for the benefit of a few wealthy landholders and to the detriment of land values in other parts of the city. Early in 1830 the General Executive Committee sent two memorials to the legislature on the subject of imprisonment for debt.[44]

Upon this question all the workingmen of the State seem to have been equally emphatic. This issue was endorsed, indeed, in Albany,[45] Troy,[46] Utica,[47] Rochester,[48] Lansingburgh,[49] Saratoga,[50] Brooklyn,[51] and other places, and by the state convention.[52]

Among the remaining demands generally made throughout the State was one for the abolition of compulsory militia service on the ground that it was unnecessary, led to vice, and imposed upon the producers a heavy burden in time and money. "Where," asked the workingmen, "is the equality, where the

43 *Proceedings of a Meeting of Mechanics and Other Working Men*, Dec. 29, 1829; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 160, 161.

44 The first memorial was published in the New York *Morning Herald*, Feb. 20, 1830. A supplementary memorial was adopted at a general meeting in March. New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Mar. 13, 1830.

45 Carey's *Select Excerpta*, XXIII, 32; *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Apr. 3, Oct. 9 and 27, and Dec. 29, 1830; *Mechanics' Press*, Apr. 24, 1830; New York *Working Man's Advocate*, July 28, 1830.

46 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Apr. 3, 1830; New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Apr. 24, 1830; *Mechanics' Press*, May 22, 1830; quoted from the Troy *Register*.

47 *Mechanics' Press*, Mar. 27 and Apr. 3, 1830; *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Aug. 14, 1830.

48 *Ibid.*, July 14, 1830.

49 *Ibid.*, Aug. 25, 1830.

50 *Ibid.*, Aug. 21, 1830.

51 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Aug. 4, 1830.

52 *Craftsman*, Sept. 4, 1830.

justice, of levying the same fine for absence, upon the man who earns his fifty or one hundred dollars per day, and the one who earns as many cents?" [53] Another demand was for the district system of elections in place of elections at large, on the ground that it would do away with the "machinery of caucuses and conventions." [54] A third demand was for the simplification of court procedure so as to place the rich and the poor on an equality in securing legal redress.[55] And a fourth was for the abolition of "the inequality of the compensation of the juror and witness, compared with that of the professional man." [56]

Other demands, though general in character, were made only in certain localities. Thus prison labour was complained of in Utica [57] and Brooklyn; [58] and the demand for tariff reform was made in Albany.[59] Still another source of complaint was in connection with taxation; a proposed land tax was exceedingly unpopular in the smaller places where the farmers were united with the mechanics and workingmen; [60] and strong opposition, especially in New York City, was aroused to the proposed removal of the tax on the stocks of banks located in that city.[61] Finally several purely local demands were made, the most important of them for the popular election of the mayor of New York City and for a single municipal legislative chamber.[62] Other similar issues related to the location of the post-office within convenient reach of the majority of the working people, and to the market regulations.[63]

Though expressing itself with more or less emphasis upon all these other questions the movement for equal citizenship

53 *Address of the General Executive Committee of the Mechanics and Other Working Men of the City of New York.*

54 *Proceedings of a Meeting of Mechanics and Other Working Men*, Dec. 29, 1829; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 163.

55 *Ibid.*

56 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Aug. 7, 1830.

57 *Mechanics' Press*, Apr. 10, 1830.

58 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Aug. 4, 1830.

59 *Mechanics' Press*, Apr. 24, 1830; quoted from the *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate; Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Oct. 27, 1830.

60 *Mechanics' Press*, Apr. 24, 1830; quoted from the *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate; Mechanics' Press*, July 17, 1830; *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Aug. 14 and Oct. 9, 1830; *Craftsman*, Sept. 4, 1830.

61 This took the form of a memorial sent to the Legislature, which was published in the New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Mar. 20, 1830.

62 *Ibid.*, Oct. 31, 1829, and Jan. 2, 1830; *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Mar. 12, 1831.

63 *Proceedings of a Meeting of Mechanics and Other Working Men*, Dec. 29, 1829; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 162.

focused on the demand for a free public school system. Wherever the new party was organised, whether in New York City or in the smaller towns of the State, the first demand was almost universally for better educational facilities. Education, indeed, was generally considered by the workingmen the most important measure of all, "inasmuch as it secures and perpetuates every political right they possess, or may hereafter obtain. . . . Unless this safeguard of liberty is secured," said the workingmen of New York City, "and by the enlightening of the mass, the axe of knowledge is laid at the root of aristocracy, there is effected, as it were, nothing. The best labours are lost, and the success of the present is ever hazarded in the future." [64] "The right of suffrage which we all enjoy," added the address adopted by the state convention, "cannot be understandingly exercised by those whose want of education deprives them of the means of acquiring such information as is necessary for a proper and correct discharge of this duty." [65]

Considerable difference of opinion existed as to exactly what system of education should be endorsed. Outside of New York City the demand was usually for a mere extension of the primary day school system. The Albany workingmen, for example, stated that one of the great objects of the "farmers, mechanics and workingmen," was "an extension of the blessings of education, by an increase of our primary or common schools." [66] Complaint was often made of the appropriation of "public funds for the endowment of colleges and academies, almost solely for the benefit of the rich, while our primary schools have but to a very limited extent secured the advantages even of a partial education to the producing classes of the community." [67] And the state convention merely demanded a system of education "more universal in its effects . . . so that no child in the republic, however poor, should grow up without an opportunity to acquire at least a competent English educa-

[64] Address adopted at a New York City meeting to nominate state officers, in New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Sept. 18, 1830; Manifest of Principles adopted at a meeting on December 28, 1830, in New York *Sentinel*, Aug. 6, 1831.

[65] *Craftsman*, Sept. 4, 1830.

[66] *Mechanics' Press*, Apr. 24, 1830; quoted from the *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*.

[67] *Proceedings of a Meeting of Mechanics and Other Working Men*, Dec. 29, 1829; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 158.

tion; and that the system should be adapted to the condition of the poor both in the city and country." [68]

But in New York City it was not merely for a literary education that the workingmen, at least of the *Sentinel* faction, asked. The idea of industrial education, of training for a vocation, which is even now young in this country, was undoubtedly first introduced by Robert Dale Owen, Frances Wright,[69] and other leaders of this early labour movement. The system of public education which they demanded was one which would "combine a knowledge of the practical arts with that of the useful sciences." "Instead of the mind being exclusively cultivated at the expense of the body," they said, "or the body slavishly over-wrought to the injury of the mind, they hope to see a nation of equal fellow citizens, all trained to produce and all permitted to enjoy. . . . As the *first and chief* of their objects, therefore, the Mechanics and Working Men put forward a system of Equal, Republican, Scientific, Practical *Education.*" [70]

[68] *Craftsman*, Sept. 4, 1830.

[69] Frances Wright later married a Frenchman by the name of D'Arusmont, who had conducted at New Harmony probably the first industrial school in this country, and was afterwards printer of the *Free Enquirer*. *Memoir of Frances Wright* (Cincinnati, 1855).

[70] New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Sept. 18, 1830.

CHAPTER IV

SPREAD OF THE MOVEMENT

National Organisation Contemplated. Newspaper organs, 286. Political action in New Jersey, 287. Workingmen organise in Delaware, 287. New Castle county convention, 288. End of Delaware movement, 289. "Farmers, mechanics, and workingmen" of New England, 290. Causes of New England movement, 292. Difficulties encountered in New England, 293. Disagreement on the tariff, 294. Similarity of purposes, 295. Measures advocated in New Jersey and Delaware, 296. Equal suffrage demanded in Delaware, 297. Demands in New England, 298. Public education, 299. Industrial training, 300.

From Philadelphia and New York the movement spread rapidly to other cities and to other States, and the "Working Men's party" was soon known throughout the country, along the Atlantic coast, and westward to Missouri. "From Maine to Georgia," said the Newark *Village Chronicle* in May, 1830, "within a few months past, we discern symptoms of a revolution, which will be second to none save that of '76. Universal education, and equal advantages at the polls, are the great and leading objects for which they [the working men] contend." [1] "Throughout this vast republic," announced the Albany *Advocate* a little later, "the farmers, mechanics and workingmen are assembling . . . to impart to its laws and administration those principles of liberty and equality unfolded in the Declaration of our Independence." [2]

A nation-wide movement appears, indeed, to have been contemplated by the workingmen. "The productive classes of the nation," said one of their Philadelphia addresses, "will be united; and their union will obtain that which has so long been cruelly denied them — that on which depends the happiness of our country, and the perpetuation of its liberties,— a general and republican system of education!" [3] The *Working Man's*

[1] New York *Working Man's Advocate*, May 8, 1830; quoted from Newark *Village Chronicle*.

[2] *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Aug. 21, 1830.

[3] *Mechanics' Free Press*, May 1, 1830.

Advocate,[4] at one time even expressed the opinion that the workingmen's party would nominate candidates for president and vice-president.

By August, 1830, "not less than twenty newspapers in the several states," are said to have "come out fearlessly in the advocacy of the *principles* of the *Working Men's Party*." [5] And by October, 1831, papers in at least seven States, including Ohio, were reported to have adopted the list of measures published at the head of its editorial column by the *Working Man's Advocate*.[6] But if all papers are counted which, at one time or another between 1829 and 1832, expressed approval of the movement, evidence now available shows that the list would include some 50 different newspapers in at least 15 States — Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina, Ohio, Indiana, and Missouri. Of these New York State had some 20, 6 of them in the city of New York. No other single State approached this record, though Pennsylvania and Massachusetts each had 4 or 5, and Ohio claimed at least 3.[7]

Actual organisation of a separate workingmen's political movement may not have been effected in all of these States. Yet evidence exists which proves its organisation in most of them, including, in addition to Pennsylvania and New York, all of the New England States mentioned, New Jersey, Delaware, and Ohio. At Canton, Ohio, the "Farmers' and Mechanics' Society of Stark County" was organised on July 8, 1829,[8] and in the fall of 1830 there appear to have been workingmen's parties in Zanesville,[9] and in Columbiana County, Ohio.[10] An association of "Mechanics and Other Working Men," formed in the city of Washington in the fall of 1830,[11] particularly invited "correspondence with any other association, in any part of the United States, founded upon the same principles and having the same objects in view." [12]

4 Aug. 7, 1830.
5 *Delaware Free Press*, Aug. 14, 1830.
6 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Oct. 8, 1831.
7 See II, 555 *et seq.*
8 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Aug. 1, 1829.
9 Boston *Courier*, Sept. 7, 1830.
10 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Sept. 18, 1830.
11 *Delaware Free Press*, Oct. 9, 1830.
12 *Address of the Association of Mechanics and Other Working Men of the City of Washington to the Operatives throughout the United States* (Washing-

In New Jersey the movement appears to have been confined to Newark and Trenton. At the latter place the workingmen held a meeting in the spring of 1830 "to adopt preparatory measures prior to their city election." [13] And at Newark a meeting of "mechanics and other labouring classes," held on March 28, 1830, nominated candidates for town offices.[14] All of these candidates were elected.[15] At the annual town meeting, moreover, the workingmen succeeded in securing the passage of a resolution "abolishing the present system of free schools, and apportioning the money so raised among *all* the schools in the village." [16] Soon after this meeting, on May 21, the "farmers, mechanics and workingmen" of Newark organised for the fall campaign.[17] But nothing further is known of their activity.

The most important movement outside of Philadelphia, New York, and New England was in Delaware, where the workingmen of Wilmington, stimulated and encouraged by the growth of the Philadelphia movement, formed an association in August or September, 1829, some six weeks or more before the organisation of the Working Men's party in New York City. On September 12, 1829, the "Association of Working People of New Castle County" issued an address "to the Mechanics, Manufacturers and Producers of New Castle County, State of Delaware," [18] in which they complained that "the poor have no laws; the laws are made by the rich and of course *for* the rich." This could be remedied, they asserted, only by "union among the working people." Accordingly they advised the working people to "arise . . . in your strength, and when called upon to exercise the distinctive privilege of a *freeman,* the 'elective franchise,' give your votes to no man who is not pledged to support your interests."

In 1829 the Association of Working People of Newcastle County did not decide to put up a ticket until shortly before the

ton, printed at the office of the *National Journal* by William Duncan, 1830).

13 New York *Working Man's Advocate,* May 8, 1830; quoted from the Newark *Village Chronicle.*

14 New York *Working Man's Advocate,* Apr. 3, 1830.

15 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate,* Apr. 24, 1830. About the same time the *Village Chronicle* and *Farmers' and Mechanics' Advocate* was started at Newark as the organ of the new movement.

16 New York *Working Man's Advocate,* Apr. 17, 1830.

17 *Ibid.,* May 15, 1830.

18 This address was published in the *Free Enquirer,* Oct. 7, 1829.

election, and in all but one of the "hundreds" its ticket was said to have been "completely suppressed" owing to the inexperience of its committees and to the exertions of politicians. But in one "hundred" the ticket received from 175 to 200 votes.

During this campaign at least one member of the Association was accused of treachery, having been, it was said, "led away by party spirit," and the result was believed to show the need of the workingmen for a press of their own.[19] Accordingly before the spring election of 1830 the *Delaware Free Press*[20] was established. Though not controlled as a party organ by the workingmen, this paper, like the New York *Free Enquirer,* was favourable to their cause.

At the spring election the Working Men's Association elected 13 out of 18 charter officers of the borough of Wilmington.[21]

Shortly afterwards the Association of Working People of New Castle County adopted at a public meeting a declaration of principles in order, as they said, "to secure the support of our fellow workmen in other parts of the State."[22] And in July the "Local, Republican, Educational Association of Working Men, of Brandywine and Red Clay Creek, and their immediate neighbourhoods" was organised,[23] and adopted a constitution in which the members renounced adherence to any political party, and gave as the purpose of their association to obtain for their posterity equal education at the expense of the state, "which will enable them to judge . . . of their rights, and all the compacts and arts of civil life." They also disclaimed any intention of "meddling with religion," and assigned to their "standing committee" the duty "to meet in general conference the duly authorised bodies of other similar associations to endeavor to promote the welfare of the working people."[24]

Meanwhile, a county meeting of "farmers, manufacturers mechanics, workingmen and other citizens of New Castle

19 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Oct. 17, 1829.

20 *The Delaware Free Press* was not primarily political but was a free-thought paper, in its contents and point of view very similar to the *Free Enquirer*. Much space was devoted to discussions of religion but one of its principal objects was stated to be "to awaken the attention of the Working People to the importance of co-operating in order to attain that rank and station in society to which they are justly entitled by their virtues and industry, but from which they have been excluded by want of a system of Equal Republican Education." *Delaware Free Press*, Jan. 23, 1830.

21 *Ibid.*, May 8, 1830.

22 *Ibid.*, May 22, 1830.

23 *Ibid.*, July 24, 1830.

24 *Ibid.*, Aug. 28, 1830.

County" had been held at Christiana on June 12, 1830, and, after adopting a preamble and resolutions, had adjourned to meet on the first Saturday in September "in order to form a Ticket, to be supported by the working people of New Castle county, at the ensuing general election." [25] Accordingly, on September 4, 1830, a meeting was held at which candidates were nominated for the General Assembly and for "Levy Court Commissioners." In the election for sheriff and coroner the farmers, mechanics, and workingmen stated that they had "no particular interest," and they declared it "unnecessary at this time to offer a candidate of our own for Representative in Congress." But they recommended that associations be formed by the workingmen of the different "hundreds" and appointed a committee in each "hundred" to "call meetings of the Working Men and those friendly to the objects they have in view, as soon as possible, previous to the election." [26]

At this election the workingmen succeeded in electing four of their candidates, one Senator, two representatives, and one Levy Court Commissioner.[27] But all four were probably also on one of the other tickets, for one of the older parties had nominated "some of the same persons for office which the Working Men had put on their ticket!" [28] And the *Delaware Free Press* admitted that "very few of the names on the working men's ticket belong to *the society of working men;* but they are all known to be friendly to the cause and views of the *working men.*" [29] Yet the result was said to be "cause for rejoicing, and augurs well for their ultimate success." [30]

Nevertheless, though in January, 1831, a "stated meeting of the Association of Working People of Newcastle County" received and ordered published a report upon the "Constitution of the State of Delaware," [31] this independent political movement seems to have been short-lived. As in Philadelphia and New York various factors combined to kill it, but perhaps the

25 This meeting also passed a resolution commending "the exertions making in different parts of the Union, by the working classes, to attain that standing in society to which they are so justly entitled," and offering to "join and co-operate with them for the attainment of this desirable object." New York *Working Man's Advocate*, June 26, 1830; quoted from the *Delaware Free Press*.

26 *Delaware Free Press*, Sept. 11, 1830.

27 *Ibid.*, Oct. 9, 1830.

28 *Ibid.*, Sept. 18, 1830.

29 *Ibid.*, Oct. 2, 1830.

30 *Ibid.*, Oct. 9, 1830.

31 Carey's *Select Excerpta*, XXIII, 156–161.

most important was the charge of religious "infidelity." The Delaware workingmen were accused, indeed, not only of being "deists" and "Fanny Wright" men, but even of advocating polygamy.[32]

In New England the year 1830 saw the beginning and the next year the end of the first political movement of "farmers, mechanics and working men." Starting in Connecticut the movement spread rapidly to Massachusetts, Vermont, and even Maine. Some political agitation probably took place also in Rhode Island.[33] And the workingmen of Dover, New Hampshire, appear to have sent one of their candidates, a machinist, to the legislature.[34]

In Connecticut three candidates of the "mechanics and workingmen" of New London were elected to the legislature by a large majority,[35] and later their ticket for town officers was also elected.[36] About the same time an association of farmers and mechanics was formed at Lyme, Connecticut.[37]

A preliminary meeting "of the laboring part" of the citizens of Woodstock, Vermont, was held in July, 1830,[38] and a committee was appointed to consider existing grievances. Later a Working Men's Society was formed at Woodstock, and a paper called the *Working Man's Gazette* was published there for at least a year. Meetings at Burlington and Middlebury soon endorsed the resolutions of the Woodstock workingmen. At Calais, too, a "meeting of the laboring class," held early in September, adopted a similar series of resolutions.[39] "We are not a little surprised," said the *Vermont American* of the Middlebury meeting, "at seeing the congregation of so great a number, who appropriately and honourably bear the title of *working men.*"[40]

In Vermont three parties existed — the National, the Anti-Masonic, and the Jackson parties — but no one of them, according to the *Working Man's Gazette,* could "command the

32 *Delaware Free Press*, Sept. 18, 1830.
33 *Free Enquirer*, Mar. 4, 1829.
34 Luther, *Address to the Working Men of New England* (1st ed.), 23, 24.
35 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Apr. 10, 1830; New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Apr. 10, 1830.
36 *Ibid.*, June 19, 1830.
37 *Ibid.*, Apr. 10 and 17, 1830.
38 *Ibid.*, July 24, 1830; quoted from the St. Johnsbury (Vt.) *Herald*.
39 *Working Man's Gazette* (Woodstock, Vt.), Oct. 14, 1830.
40 *Ibid.*, Sept. 23, 1830; quoted from the *Vermont American*.

field." The Working Men's party therefore expected "to become at least the arbiters of the political contest in the election of governor, lieutenant governor, and councillors." [41]

Even in Maine "a proposition . . . has been whispered round . . . to get up a similar party." [42] And in the spring of 1831 the *Portland Mechanic* was reported to be defending the principles of the workingmen.[43]

Plymouth was apparently the first town in Massachusetts to fall in with the new movement. In April the mechanics and workingmen of Plymouth held a "numerous public meeting" and resolved to send five representatives to the Massachusetts Legislature.[44]

In Boston the movement began in July, 1830, with the publication of two workingmen's papers, the *Workingmen's Advocate* and the *Practical Politician and Workingmen's Advocate*,[45] which were soon united under the name *Workingmen's Advocate and Practical Politician*.[46] At the first public meeting in August the hall, according to the Boston *Advocate*, "although capable of holding several hundred, was filled to overflowing, by a class of men, who from appearance, were warm from their workshops and from other places of daily toil, but who bore on their countenances conviction of their wrongs, and a determination to use every proper means to have them redressed." The proceedings of the workingmen of Woodstock were read and "received with universal approbation"; [47] and at a later date an organisation was formed under the title of "Working Men of Boston." [48] In December the Boston workingmen had candidates in the field for the offices of mayor and aldermen,[49] and the next spring they nominated a full ticket of 60 legislative candidates,[50] one of whom, who was also on the Independent ticket, received 443 votes.[51]

Other places in Massachusetts at which meetings were held

41 *Ibid.*, May 17, 1831.

42 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, June 16, 1830; quoted from the *Eastern Galaxy* (Brunswick, Me.).

43 Article on education quoted from the Portland *Mechanic*, in *Working Man's Gazette*, May 10, 1831.

44 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, May 1, 1830; quoted from the *Old Colony Memorial* (Plymouth, Mass.).

45 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Aug. 7, 1830.

46 *Ibid.*, Dec. 18, 1830.

47 *Working Man's Gazette*, Sept. 23, 1830; quoted from the Boston *Advocate*.

48 Boston *Courier*, Aug. 28, 1830; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 188, 189.

49 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Dec. 4, 1830.

50 Boston *Courier*, May 7, 1831.

51 Boston *Chronicle*, May 14, 1831.

in 1830 were Northampton,[52] Dedham,[53] and Dorchester.[54]

Early in 1831, county conventions were held in Hampshire [55] and Franklin counties.[56] At the former, candidates were nominated for governor and lieutenant-governor. Associations, indeed, are said to have been formed in most of the counties of Massachusetts. And the secretary of the Dorchester Working Men's party issued a circular to associations and individuals of kindred views throughout the country requesting co-operation.[57]

Throughout New England lack of economic and political equality was the chief cause of complaint. For this movement was primarily a revolt against the position into which the industrial and commercial development of the country was forcing the "productive classes," as all those were called "who by their honest industry, render an equivalent to society for the means of subsistence which they draw therefrom." [58] "Men of wealth and of the learned professions," particularly lawyers, appear to have been regarded as the oppressors of the "farmers, mechanics and workingmen." The workingmen of Woodstock, Vermont, declared that "while those who subsist by labour, who are in fact the *producers* of the wealth of the country, are becoming poorer, the non-producers, who are *consumers* of that wealth, are, *pari passu*, growing richer." [59] And one of the aims of the Working Men's Society of Dedham, according to Samuel Whitcomb, was "to promote the distribution among the producers of wealth, of a more equitable proportion of the comforts and enjoyments resulting from their individual and joint labours." [60]

The workingmen of New England viewed "all attempts made to degrade the working classes as so many blows aimed at the existence of our free political, and civil institutions." [61] "We

52 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Aug. 7, 1830; Boston *Courier*, Aug. 14, 1830.

53 *Working Man's Gazette*, Oct. 21, 1830.

54 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Dec. 22, 1830.

55 Boston *Courier*, Mar. 11 and 25, 1831.

56 *Ibid.*, Mar. 25, 1831.

57 *Working Man's Gazette*, Feb. 9, 1831; quoted from the Boston *Advocate and Politician*.

58 Resolutions of Boston workingmen, in Boston *Courier*, Aug. 28, 1830; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 188.

59 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, July 24, 1830; quoted from the St. Johnsbury (Vt.) *Herald*.

60 Samuel Whitcomb, Jr., *Address before the Working Men's Society of Dedham*, Sept. 7, 1831, p. 21 (Pamphlet).

61 *Working Man's Gazette*, Oct. 21, 1830. Similar resolutions were passed by the Boston workingmen (Boston *Courier*, Aug. 28, 1830; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 188), and by the Hampshire County Convention (Boston *Courier*, Mar. 11, 1831).

believe," said the Dorchester party, "that in some particulars the spirit of our republican government has been perverted and its equalising tendency thwarted, by the controlling influence which those have obtained in its administration, who, without merit, claim to belong 'to the upper classes of society' . . . And believing that it has been by similar fraud on those who are insolently designated the 'common people,' and the 'lower classes,' that the liberties of other countries have been overthrown, and aristocracy and despotism erected on their ruins; we deem it our duty . . . to arouse our fellow citizens to the peril of these departures from the purity and simplicity of our republican system." [62]

The difficulties encountered by the New England workingmen did not differ materially from those with which their brethren in Philadelphia and New York had to cope. "We are charged," said the workingmen of Woodstock, Vermont, "with being Deists and Infidels. On [the] one hand it is alleged we are under Masonic influence — on the other hand, it is said as confidently we are all Anti-Masons. We are charged with being Agrarians and Levellers, and that we intend to use the guillotine." [63] The Boston *Courier* even announced that the new party was formed "under the patronage of Frances Wright, who is the 'lady elect,' or, as they would say at Almack's, 'the lady patroness'; but we are informed that there is already a schism amongst them — some being for going all lengths with Fanny, and some for stopping a little short of the grand consummation of her views." [64] Yet one of the resolutions passed by the Boston workingmen declared that they viewed "with abhorrence every attempt to disturb the public peace by uniting with political doctrines any question of religion or anti-religion." [65]

As early as 1830 the presidential struggle began to cast its shadow before. "Jacksonians," according to the Northampton *Courier,* were among the most active individuals present at a

62 Circular issued by the secretary of the Dorchester Working Men's party to similar organisations and to individuals of kindred views throughout the country, in *Working Man's Gazette,* Feb. 9, 1831; quoted from the Boston *Advocate and Politician.*

63 New York *Working Man's Advocate,* July 31, 1830; quoted from the Woodstock *Observer; Working Man's Gazette,* Sept. 23, 1830.

64 Boston *Courier,* Aug. 11, 1830.

65 *Ibid.,* Aug. 28, 1830; *Doc. Hist.,* V, 188.

meeting of "farmers, mechanics and working men" in that town, and the *Courier* cautioned the workingmen "against leaguing themselves with any party where the object is not apparent, and which is not avowed and acknowledged with a proper degree of frankness and confidence."[66] On the other hand, one Jackson paper in New Hampshire called the Working Men's party the greatest humbug of a humbugging age, and said that the leaders were not workingmen but "decayed federal dandies."[67] And in 1832 anti-Jackson appeals addressed to farmers, mechanics, and labourers were circulated in various parts of New England, particularly in New Hampshire[68] and Maine.[69] Yet in the spring of 1833, an article in the Lowell *Mercury* called upon "the carpenters and mechanics residing on the Banks of the Merrimac," to vote for a Democrat for Congress on the ground that under Jackson wages had been higher than for many years past and that there had been plenty of work for all, while under Adams they had been obliged to seek employment in the British provinces.[70]

In spite of different stages of industrial development in different parts of the country and in spite of difficulties of intercommunication and co-operation, the platform of the Working Men's party wherever organised was on nearly every public question the same. Apart from "agrarianism" and "state guardianship" the tariff was, indeed, the only subject upon which organisations of workingmen in different parts of the country directly disagreed.[71] And in this case apparent disagreement may have been due solely to the fact that advocates of a protective tariff assumed without warrant the popular name —"mechanics and workingmen." For the associations of so-called workingmen which favoured protection generally avoided committing themselves to the usual demands of the Working Men's party. The Washington Association, for example, in its address "to the Operatives throughout the United States,"[72]

66 Boston *Courier*, Aug. 14, 1830; quoted from Northampton *Courier*.

67 Quoted in the New England *Weekly Review*, Dec. 6, 1830.

68 *Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot*, Nov. 3, 1832.

69 *State Herald: The Manufacturers' and Mechanics' Advocate* (Portsmouth, N. H.), Nov. 1, 1832; quoted from the Portland *Advertiser*. Their appeal was also published in part in the Boston *Courier*, Oct. 23, 1832.

70 Lowell *Mercury*, May 3, 1833.

71 In 1830 a writer in the Boston *Courier* complained that, whereas in Washington and Zanesville, Ohio, the party supported the "American System," in Boston it was against protection. Boston *Courier*, Sept. 7, 1830.

72 *Address of the Association of Me-*

barely mentioned the need for "affording to every citizen the opportunity of acquiring the elements of education," and was primarily devoted to advocacy of the "American System" and of "Internal Improvements." And the main purpose of the Canton, Ohio, "farmers' and mechanics' society" seems to have been to secure an agreement with the local merchants not to import "from other markets, . . . articles that are manufactured in our own shops." This "morbid action of commerce," was said to have "produced the lamentable state of England, Ireland, and other portions of the old world; and . . . begins already to make itself felt in the Atlantic regions of the United States." [73]

On the other hand, most if not all of the *bona fide* organisations of the Working Men's party appear to have been opposed to protection.[74] Even in New England, though frequently confronted by determined efforts to persuade them that, if unprotected from foreign competition, their condition must sink to that of European labourers,[75] the workingmen appear to have

chanics and Other Working Men of the City of Washington to the Operatives throughout the United States.

[73] New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Feb. 6, 1830.

The "Address to Merchants," issued by this society, also declared that "labor saving machinery, when employed by capitalists, brings certain distress upon laborers, by throwing many out of employment, and reducing the wages of the rest, though it might, if the profits were equalised — if producers would, by co-operation, take such advantages into their own hands, be made highly valuable to lighten their tasks, and increase their wealth and leisure." But the first object of the society was declared to be "to obtain a correct knowledge of the people's rights, of facilities in mechanical and agricultural pursuits; of domestic, as well as political economy; and of all the interests and obligations of the social compact." For, it was asserted, "the very existence of a free, popular government, depends upon the distribution of knowledge and wealth among the people, and upon their mutual confidence and co-operation." *Ibid.*, Feb. 6, 1830.

[74] The workingmen of Philadelphia declared that legislators, both state and national, had "contrived to make [taxes] fall almost exclusively on the artices consumed chiefly by the working people" (*Mechanics' Free Press*, Aug. 26, 1829); and those of Phillipsburg, Penn., complained of high tariff duties (*Ibid.*, Oct. 24, 1829). Yet the workingmen of Pittsburgh, Penn., were calling for "the protection of National Industry." *Delaware Free Press*, July 31, 1830.

[75] The Working Men's Society of Dedham, Mass., in 1831, listened to an address from Samuel Whitcomb, Jr., in which he asserted that one means by which the non-producing classes injured the producing classes was by importing products "from other regions, where the work is still performed by serfs or slaves" and thus bringing "the hardy yeomanry of our own land, as well as our skilful manufacturers and mechanics, into a ruinous competition with those unfortunate fellow beings of other states and countries. And here," he added, "we see the connexion, and sympathy of interest that exists, and ought to be felt, between the labouring and producing classes of mankind, in all countries, and throughout the world. If one portion of them is oppressed, and forced to toil for nought, the produce of their labour is employed as a means of depressing the prices of their brethren in other lands." (Samuel Whitcomb, Jr., *Address before the Working Men's Society of Dedham*, Sept. 7, 1831.) And in 1832 a meeting of "Farmers, Mechanics, Manufacturers, and other citizens of the county of Hampshire," at Northampton, Mass., resolved, "That we do not

agreed with the assertion of the *Mechanics' Free Press* that "of all others, tariff protected manufacturers are most prone to reduce the wages of their workmen." [76]

With this questionable exception substantially the same measures were advocated by the workingmen in most of the western and southern cities, as well as in New Jersey, Delaware, and New England, as were advocated by their comrades in Philadelphia and New York. In Indiana their organ endorsed the "Manifest of Principles" of the *Sentinel* faction of New York.[77] In South Carolina the *Southern Free Press* is said to have been in favour even "of having all classes, whether rich or poor, educated in republican national schools." [78] And in Ohio the *Working Men's Shield* gave as the principal subjects which it expected to cover: "Equal universal education; abolition of all licensed monopolies, capital punishment and imprisonment for debt; an entire revision of the militia system; equal taxation on property; improvements in the arts and sciences; notices of new inventions, etc., etc." [79] One of the toasts at the workingmen's celebration of the Fourth of July in Philadelphia in 1830 was to "editors of Working Men's papers throughout the union, although differing in minor points, their ultimate objects are the same." [80]

The Newark workingmen, though they condemned "agrarianism and infidelity," urged the abolition of imprisonment for debt, of the militia system, and of monopolies, advocated "a more equal and just system of taxation," particularly "the taxation of Bonds and Mortgages," asked for "the revision of our code of jurisprudence," and claimed "from the hands of our national and state legislatures . . . the appropriation of our public funds, to a reasonable extent, for the purposes of education." [81]

wish to impair the comforts of the laboring class of our fellow citizens, by forcing them into an unnatural competition with the half-fed and half-clothed paupers of Great Britain." Boston *Courier*, June 15, 1832.

[76] *Mechanics' Free Press*, May 15, 1830. The same idea was expressed in this paper on Apr. 17, 1830.

[77] New York *Working Man's Advocate*, June 11, 1831; extract from editorial address in first number of *The Union and Mechanics' and Working Men's Advocate* (Indianapolis, Ind.).

[78] New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Jan. 30, 1830.

[79] *Working Men's Shield* (Cincinnati, Ohio), Dec. 8, 1832. This paper stated further that "the working men call upon their Representatives to grant no more money for exclusive colleges, but to endow industrial schools where all shall be able to obtain an industrial and an intellectual education." *Ibid.*, Dec. 22, 1832.

[80] *Delaware Free Press*, July 10, 1830.

[81] *Mechanics' Press*, June 26 and July 24, 1830.

The demands of the Delaware workingmen were also very similar to those of their comrades in Philadelphia and New York. In addition to public education, which they placed first, they demanded the abolition of imprisonment for debt, a mechanics' lien law, the exemption from execution of "certain property" of "the Farmer, Mechanic and Working Man," the abolition of lotteries, the prevention of "the useless and burdensome taxation of our property," the simplification of laws and of legal procedure, a district system of elections, and "the repeal of that law which makes wealth the criterion of merit, by debarring all from office who are not Freeholders." [82] They disclaimed "all intention, to alter the present division of property, except such as may result from an *Equal Republican Education.*" [83]

One of the earliest pleas for equal suffrage in this country was made by Delaware workingmen. In a report on the revision of the State Constitution presented to the Association of Working People of Newcastle County early in 1831, they urged that the right of suffrage be extended to women. "We apprehend," said the authors of this report, "that it would be no easy task, at this more advanced part of the march of mind, to maintain the ground that was assumed, in excluding females from the right of voting at the polls. This interesting portion of the community comprise a fair moiety of our population. Wherefore should they be denied the immunities of free men? Does any one deem that their interference in public affairs would be prejudicial to the general interest? or would we pretend to measure their capabilities for judging correctly, in relation to self-government? — Let us reflect that it has not been considered commendable to give their attention to those subjects. Let data be found, before an attempt is made to calculate the extent and utility of their influence, or the salutary effect of their taking part in that in which they have, or ought to have an equal interest." The suffrage, however, was to be confined to "free white persons." [84]

82 Proceedings of a meeting of the Association of Working People of Newcastle County, held April 24, 1830, in *Delaware Free Press*, May 22, 1830.

83 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, June 26, 1830; quoted from the *Delaware Free Press*.

84 Carey's *Select Excerpta*, XXXI, 156–161.

In New England the specific measures favoured by the Working Men's party in 1830 and 1831 were practically the same as in other parts of the country. In Boston, in addition to demands for public education and for the abolition of monopolies and of imprisonment for debt, the workingmen asked for a reform in the militia system, complete separation of religion and politics, the simplification of statutes and of legal procedure to minimise the demand for lawyers' services, and the compulsory mandate for representatives.[85] The "Workingmen's Prayer," [86] presented to the Massachusetts legislature on June 1, 1831, also demanded "equal taxation on all surplus property, above the immediate wants and necessaries of life, increasing in ratio in proportion to the possessions of each individual, an effective lien law for labourers, . . . the election of all officers by the people, the whole people, and the people only, and a total and eternal cessation of all legislation on religion."

In other parts of New England similar demands were generally brought forward. The workingmen of Dedham,[87] Dorchester,[88] and Northampton, Massachusetts,[89] and of Lyme, Connecticut,[90] believed that "privileged monied institutions" were "great evils to the working class." And the credit system was denounced by the workingmen of Northampton and of Woodstock and Calais, Vermont,[91] as tending to encourage extravagance and as weakening the "strongest incentive to exertion — the hope of coming reward." The abolition of imprisonment for debt was another important demand in Ded-

85 Boston *Courier*, Aug. 28, 1830; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 188, 189.

86 *Workingmen's Prayer. Respectfully dedicated to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Counsellors, and Members of the Senate and House of Representatives of this Commonwealth, in General Court Convened. Presented to the Legislature of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, at their session in Boston, June 1st, 1831.* This prayer is strongly tinged with free thought or "infidelity" and probably emanated, not from the workingmen's party itself, but from a society of "Free Enquirers" which existed in Boston at that time and doubtless derived its inspiration from the Wright-Owen movement in New York. Nevertheless the adopton by the Massachusetts House of Representatives of an amendment to the constitution taking from the legislature the power of taxation for the support of religious worship was heartily approved by the Boston *Advocate and Politician* as "a step toward more liberal principles." *Working Man's Gazette*, May 10, 1831; quoted from the Boston *Advocate and Politician*.

87 *Working Man's Gazette*, Oct. 21, 1830.

88 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Dec. 22, 1830.

89 Boston *Courier*, Mar. 11, 1831; quoted from the Northampton *Courier*.

90 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Apr. 17, 1830.

91 *Working Man's Gazette*, Sept. 23 and Oct. 14, 1830.

ham,[92] Dorchester,[93] and Northampton, Massachusetts,[94] and in Woodstock [95] and Calais,[96] Vermont.

Other evils were also sometimes made the subject of complaint. Thus a reduction of lawyers' and sheriffs' fees and of "the charges of professional men generally," including doctors, was demanded by the workingmen of Woodstock, Vermont,[97] while the Lyme, Connecticut, Farmers' and Mechanics' Association complained of the poll tax and declared that "our courts of justice should be so organised as to give the working classes equal privileges with the more wealthy," [98] and the Hampshire county convention passed resolutions relating to the taxation of mortgages and to the "waste of the people's treasure through excessive state expenditures." [99]

The list of "Working Men's Measures" published in the spring of 1831 at the head of the editorial column of the *Working Man's Gazette* of Woodstock, Vermont, was almost identical with similar lists displayed by the *Mechanics' Free Press* of Philadelphia and by the *Working Man's Advocate* of New York.[1] A little later a demand for the abolition of capital punishment, said to have been copied from the Portland *Mechanic,* was added to this list.[2]

Wherever the workingmen organised, even in New England where a public school system already existed which was at least superior to the "free schools" of New York and Pennsylvania, public education was their first and foremost demand.

The argument for public schools was primarily and fundamentally that, as the Delaware workingmen put it, "in all governments where the sovereignty rests among the people, as it does in our republic, a general system of education, obtained by some means, is absolutely necessary to its existence." [3] The workingmen of Newcastle County admitted that in the ranks of the nonproducing classes, which were "in direct opposition to the interests of the laborer," they were "accustomed to find

92 *Ibid.*, Oct. 21, 1830.
93 *Farmers', Mechanics' and Workingmen's Advocate*, Dec. 22, 1830.
94 Boston *Courier*, Mar. 11, 1831; quoted from the Northampton *Courier*.
95 *Working Man's Gazette*, Sept. 23, 1830.
96 *Ibid.*, Oct. 14, 1830.
97 *Ibid.*, Sept. 23, 1830.
98 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Apr. 17, 1830.
99 Boston *Courier*, Mar. 11, 1831; quoted from the Northampton *Courier*.
1 *Working Man's Gazette*, May 17, 1831. See above, I. 217, 218, 275.
2 *Ibid.*, June 14, 1831.
3 *Delaware Free Press*, Jan. 16, 1830.

men best qualified for the office of Legislators, as but few of our own class have received the benefits of a liberal education." But the reason for this, they said, was because "the funds that should have been appropriated to a rational system of general education at the expense of the state, have been shamefully squandered and misapplied." "Fellow citizens," said one of their earliest addresses to the public, "let every man remember, whatever may be his lot in life, whether of high or low degree, that he is an American, and a citizen of the United States; let him remember the awful responsibility which rests upon him in making a proper use of the invaluable privilege he possesses in the 'elective franchise'; that it is not for himself alone that he acts, but for posterity; that, if it be too late to secure the blessings of education for himself, it is time he was up and doing to secure them for his children; thus to hasten the time when it cannot be said that want of education prevents the laboring classes from watching over their own interests." [4] In New England, too, the need for "more general diffusion of intelligence and education" was a topic on which there appears to have been "no diversity of opinion" [5] among the workingmen, who believed "general information and intellectual cultivation" "absolutely necessary to perpetuate our free institutions of government." [6]

"State guardianship" and industrial training, though not usually mentioned in connection with the demand for better educational facilities, were frequently favoured, not only by the newspaper organs of the movement in different parts of the country, but in official resolutions of the workingmen's organisations of 1830 and 1831. Thus the workingmen of Newcastle County in a memorial sent to the Delaware legislature early in 1830 declared themselves in favour of "a system of education which shall combine the operative with the intellectual, . . . where the children will be able to support themselves while receiving their education, and be no longer a burden to their parents, (who are in many instances ill able to bear it), nor to the

[4] Address of the Association of Working People of Newcastle County, Delaware, in *Free Enquirer*, Oct. 7, 1829.

[5] Boston *Courier*, Mar. 11, 1831; from the account of the Hampshire County Convention in the Northampton *Courier*.

[6] Resolutions passed in Dedham, in *Working Man's Gazette*, Oct. 21, 1830.

state." [7] The workingmen of New London, Connecticut, too, are said to have made "the subject of Public Education, at the expense of the State, including food and clothing to those who choose to accept it, . . . their polar star." [8] State guardianship was also discussed in Vermont.[9] And in Boston the platform of the workingmen's party demanded "the establishment of a liberal system of education, attainable to all," and a "diffusion of knowledge, particularly in the elements of those sciences which pertain to mechanical employments, and to the politics of our common country." Thus the working men anticipated the modern idea of industrial education which combines mechanical training with instruction in civics.[10]

7 *Delaware Free Press*, Jan. 16, 1830.
8 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, June 19, 1830.
9 *Working Man's Gazette*, Oct. 7, 1830. Education was not mentioned in the resolutions adopted by the workingmen of Woodstock, Vt.
10 Boston *Courier*, Aug. 28, 1830; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 188, 189.

CHAPTER V

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF FARMERS, MECHANICS AND OTHER WORKINGMEN

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THE most important New England labour movement of this period was not carried on by these sporadic and widely scattered political organisations formed in imitation of the New York and Philadelphia Working Men's party, but by the first New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics, and other Working Men. This association, which was born at Providence, Rhode Island, at a meeting of delegates held in December, 1831, and which died at Northampton, Massachusetts, in October, 1834, was a new type of labour organisation, in part economic and in part political. Though growing out of the ten-hour movement it soon found the establishment of the shorter work-day by direct action impracticable, and therefore modified that part of its programme and took up other questions, most of them political in character. This development led in 1833 and again in 1834 to the re-entry of the workingmen into Massachusetts state politics, this time with a candidate for governor, and in 1834 at least with a candidate for Congress

also. Yet the New England Association itself confined its activities mainly to the preparation of memorials to be presented to the legislatures of the New England States.

HOURS AND OTHER GRIEVANCES

The New England Association, like the Working Men's party in Philadelphia and New York, grew out of a demand for shorter hours of labour. Though the ten-hour day had been established in New York and in part in Philadelphia, mechanics and labourers as well as factory operatives in New England still worked "from daylight to dark."

In Boston, as has been seen, the house carpenters had gone on strike in 1825 for a ten-hour day. Defeated in that year, both the carpenters and the masons had tried again in 1830, but once more unsuccessfully.[1] Yet the ten-hour movement continued to grow, not only in Boston but throughout New England. Early in November, 1831, the mechanics and machinists of Providence, Rhode Island, resolved that after March 20, 1832, they would work only ten hours.[2] And a month later a meeting of delegates "from various parts of New England," held at Providence, issued a call for a convention to be held at Boston in February.[3] This convention, the first of the New England Association, also voted to establish the ten-hour day.[4] In February, 1832, the Boston *Transcript* announced: "Meetings have been held and resolutions adopted in various parts of New England, recommending ten hours per day, as the amount that ought, hereafter to be considered as a day's work. Highly respectable mechanics have sanctioned this measure, by their countenance and support; and it seems to have met general approbation." [5]

Closely allied to the lack of leisure was the other chief grievance of the New England Association, "the low estimation in which useful labour is held by many whose station in

1 U. S. Bureau of Labor, *Sixteenth Report*, 725; from Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor, *Eleventh Annual Report*, 3.

2 *State Herald: The Manufacturers' and Mechanics' Advocate*, Nov. 3, 1831.

3 *Columbian Centinel*, Feb. 15, 1832; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 192.

4 The *Co-operator*, Apr. 3, 1832.

5 The *Transcript* came out at that time for shorter hours, declaring that "the old practice, which compels a carpenter or mason to work as long as he can see to drive a nail or lay a brick, is oppressive in the extreme." Boston *Transcript*, Feb. 20, 1832.

society enable them to give the tone to public opinion." "All who can do so," said the call for the second convention, "resort to some means of living without hard work, the learned professions are crowded, and combinations are formed by that portion of society who have money and leisure, or who live by their wits, to increase and maintain their own relative importance, whilst the more industrious and useful portion of the community, who are too intent upon their daily occupation to form combinations for mutual advantage, or to guard against the devices of their better informed or more enterprising neighbours, are reduced to constant toil, stripped of the better share of their earnings, holding a subordinate, if not degraded situation in society, and frequently despised by the very men, and women and children, who live at ease upon the fruits of their labour. There is no consideration more discouraging, and at the same time more wholly destitute of foundation," it added, "than a prevailing opinion that the industrious and the unlearned portion of the community cannot govern themselves." [6]

This association was distinctly an effort to unite producers of all classes, including not only farmers but factory workers, with mechanics and city workingmen in an effort to improve their condition. Small employers were apparently considered to be producers and as such entitled to the protection of the New England Association. In the call for the second convention, for example, it was complained that master workmen were "exposed to a competition that is frequently ruinous from the disproportionate means of those who contend." [7] The aid of farmers was particularly solicited, "since the welfare of no one portion of our fellow citizens is so vitally important to the general prosperity, as that portion which is engaged in agriculture; and in the present attempt to better the condition of the labouring classes, the farmer must lend his aid, or nothing effectual need be hoped for as a measure of general improvement." [8] The association further declared that "there is an indissoluble connection between the interests of the cultivator of the soil, and the mechanics and every class of laborers"; that "the interests of the producing classes are in accordance

[6] *To the Workingmen of New England* (Boston, Aug. 11, 1832; Pamphlet).
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] *Ibid.*

with the just claims of every other class in the community, and essential to the welfare of posterity"; and that "there can be no sound system of legislative policy, which does not secure the safety and prosperity of these fundamental interests, and which does not protect the interests of the laboring classes against the oppression of the idle, avaricious, and aristocratic." [9]

The Working Men's party in other parts of the country had frequently included three classes — farmers, mechanics, and workingmen — but the New England Association added a fourth class, factory operatives. New England was already dominated by its manufacturing industries. In 1834 it was said that "seven-eighths of the merchants of Boston are identified, either as directors, stockholders, or agents, with the immense manufacturing monopolies which exist throughout Massachusetts — and which are the cause of hundreds, nay thousands, of persons, of both sexes, being drawn into one vast mass for the purpose of making or attending machinery and the other necessary business of manufacturing establishments — this mass being under the direction or control of a very few men." "Massachusetts," declared the New York *Times*, "is fast sinking beneath the weight of the immense incorporated companies which spread over her territory." [10] Factory operatives were therefore recognised as a separate and distinct class, with problems and grievances different from those of city workingmen. Factory work, indeed, stood midway between the trades and the unskilled work of common labourers.

As for the "manufacturing population," though the "farmers, mechanics and workingmen" admitted that no such extremity of misery existed in this country as in the old world, they called attention to the fact that "there is nothing in our existing laws, nor in our present moral or social habits, as a people, to guard us against the worst evils that are found abroad." [11] Though in the United States, they said, "the free laborers have not yet reached the level of the slave," "some of them are fast descending to it, particularly the *young children* of 'workingmen.'" [12]

The New England Association early found, however, that it

9 Carey's *Select Excerpta*, IV, 435.

10 Boston *Courier*, Nov. 18, 1834; quoted from the New York *Times*.

11 *To the Working Men of New England.*

12 Carey's *Select Excerpta*, IV, 435.

could expect little or no help from factory operatives. "The absence of delegates from the factory villages," said the New Haven delegates to the 1833 convention, "gives reason to fear that the operatives in the factories are already subdued to the bidding of the employers — that they are already sold to the oppressor, that they have felt the chains riveted upon themselves and their children, and despair of redemption. The Farmers and Mechanics, then, are the last hope of the American people. If they falter, from ignorance or from fear, if they are diverted from their object by deception or by reproaches, the next generation will find its 'workingmen' pusillanimous subjects of an aristocratic government, naked, famished and in hovels, spinning that others may be clothed, sewing that others may reap, and building palaces for others to inhabit." [13]

CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS AND INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES

In December, 1831, as has been seen, a meeting of delegates "from various parts of New England" assembled at Providence, Rhode Island, and resolved "that the Mechanics and Working Men of New England, generally, be requested to send delegates to represent them" in a convention to be held at Boston in the following February.[14] Little is known about this convention, though the constitution adopted and the reports of two committees, one on the education of children in manufacturing districts, and another on morals and education, have been preserved.[15] The constitution provided that the association should be known as the New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics, and other Working Men, that auxiliary branches should be formed in each town and manufacturing village in which there were fifteen members, and that a general convention "of one or more delegates from each auxiliary association" should be held annually in September.[16]

The objects of this first convention, according to the official call, were "to mature measures to concentrate the efforts of the

13 *Ibid.*

14 *Columbian Centinel*, Feb. 15, 1832; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 192. The convention was held February 16–17. *State Herald: The Manufacturers' and Mechanics' Advocate*, Feb. 2, 1832.

15 The *Co-operator*, Apr. 3, 1832; *Free Enquirer*, June 14, 1832; Boston *Transcript*, Mar. 24, 1832; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 192–199.

16 The *Co-operator*, Apr. 3, 1832; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 192–195.

labouring classes, to regulate the hours of labour, by one uniform standard, to promote the cause of education and general information, to reform abuses practised upon them, and to maintain their rights, as American Freemen." [17] In accordance with these objects, it was resolved that vigilance committees be appointed in each State represented "to collect and publish facts respecting the condition of labouring men, women, and children, and abuses practiced on them by their employers," as well as to prepare memorials to the various legislatures on the subjects of hours of labour and the education of factory children.[18]

The New England Association was evidently designed to be, at least in part, a big industrial union, not unlike the Knights of Labour. Though it did not talk of strikes or "turn-outs," the delegates to this first convention, as has been seen, voted "to reduce the hours of labor to ten per day, after the twentieth of March next." Provision was made for a war chest, for one article of the constitution stipulated that each member should pay an annual tax of 55 cents, and another directed each auxiliary society to appoint a committee with "power to relieve the distresses of any member of this association, who may have been thrown out of employ by having conformed to the provisions of this constitution, and draw on the General Treasurer for reimbursement of the sum or sums thus paid out." [19] Finally a resolution was passed which instructed each delegate in the convention "to use his exertions to raise by subscription, funds for the relief of such members as may be injured by their compliance with the third article of the constitution." [20]

This third article of the constitution pledged the members to the ten-hour day without any reduction in wages. It read as follows: "Each and every person that shall sign this constitution, except practical farmers, shall, so long as he may remain a member of the Association stand pledged on his honor, to labor no more than ten hours for one day, unless on the condition of receiving an extra compensation, at the rate of one tenth part of a day's wages, for each extra hour he may labor,

17 *Columbian Centinel*, Feb. 15, 1832; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 192.

18 *Free Enquirer*, June 14, 1832; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 199.

19 The *Co-operator*, Apr. 3, 1832; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 194, 195.

20 The *Co-operator*, Apr. 3, 1832.

over and above the said ten hours per day. And any member offending against the provisions of this article, shall forthwith be expelled." The fourth article of the constitution, moreover, forbade members to "submit to any deduction in a bill by an employer." [21]

Yet the association did not depend entirely upon direct action, but proposed also that vigilance committees in the different States should memorialise their state legislatures "praying for the regulation of the hours of labor, according to the standard adopted by this Association." [22]

Branches of the New England Association were formed in Boston in March, 1832,[23] and soon afterwards in Lowell,[24] New Bedford,[25] and doubtless in other places.

The second convention [26] met in the State House at Boston in September, 1832. The call stated that "a full representation from the manufacturing districts is expected, and the mechanics and labouring men generally will send their delegates"; but its authors were apparently more doubtful of the farmers, for they made a special appeal for the representation of "the farming interest." In order to secure a large delegation it was recommended that, in communities where no branch existed, "such as may desire to send delegates to the convention . . . take the opinion of the greatest number of neighbours at hand who are friendly to the cause, and select suitable persons for that purpose, without the delay of a more formal organisation."

Delegates were present from five New England States — Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maine, and Massachusetts — and the convention was opened with prayer.

21 *Ibid.*; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 192–195. The fourth article of the constitution read in full as follows: "No person while a member of this Association, shall submit to any deduction in a bill by an employer, nor consent to accept, as payment in full for any bill, a less sum than the full amount thereof — unless by the decision of a court of law, or by a body of referees, jointly appointed, unless his bill shall be found erroneous, either in its details or total amount. And every member offending against the provisions of this article, shall be forthwith expelled."

22 *Free Enquirer*, June 14, 1832; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 199.

23 Boston *Courier*, Mar. 13, 1832; The *Co-operator*, Apr. 28, 1832.

24 *Ibid.*, Apr. 28, 1832.

25 *Ibid.*, July 21, 1832. The New Bedford workingmen were building a Mechanics' Hall.

26 The call for this convention, entitled "*To the Workingmen of New England*," was published in pamphlet form with a request to editors "who take an interest in the welfare of their labouring fellow-citizens," to copy it "or such portion of it as may suit their convenience." There was also a Workingmen's Convention at Andover on Nov. 5, 1832, which issued an "Address to the People." (Boston *Courier*, Nov. 5, 1832.) This was probably a county political convention.

Charles Douglass, of New London, Connecticut, who had evidently been elected president at the February meeting, was then re-elected to that office, and the vice-presidents and secretaries were also re-elected. Seth Luther, of Providence, and G. W. Saunders, of Boston, were invited to seats in the convention. And a communication was received from a meeting of mechanics and workingmen in New York enclosing an address to the people of the United States.[27]

The convention proceeded to consider a list of ten topics, some of them relating to specific demands and others to questions of organisation, which had been prepared by a committee especially appointed for that purpose. As for organisation, the propositions included not only "the organisation of the Working Men in every town and county of New England," but "the institution of a Central Committee in each State," and "the expediency of a National Convention, to meet in some central part of the Union, representing the workingmen of the United States." [28]

In this convention the emphasis was shifted from the ten-hour day to political questions. The committee appointed to arrange topics for discussion presented the "Ten-Hour System," but with the supplementary suggestion, "whether it is expedient for the Convention to make its adoption by their associates, indispensable, or to leave it to the discretion of the various Associations in New England." [29] And the resolution finally adopted merely recommended earnestly the continuance of the ten-hour system "where it has become established, and its adoption throughout every department of manual industry, as tending alike to the benefit of the laborer, the employer, and the capitalist." [30] One reason for modifying the stand previously taken on this subject was perhaps the failure of the Boston ship carpenters in their efforts to secure a ten-hour day.

The most important single industry in New England at this time, except for the manufacture of textiles, was doubtless the building of ships. Yet this industry was still in the handicraft and merchant-capitalist stage. The "employers" were not the

27 *Columbian Centinel*, Sept. 8, 1832; The *Co-operator*, Sept. 22, 1832.
28 *Free Enquirer*, Sept. 22, 1832.
29 *Ibid.*
30 Carey's *Select Excerpta*, IV, 435.

master workmen, but the merchant shippers who usually furnished the materials and contracted with the master workmen for labour. The industrial relations between merchant, master, and journeyman are clearly shown in the bitterly contested struggle of journeymen ship carpenters for a ten-hour day, which occurred in Boston in 1832. And this struggle appears to have resulted directly from the agitation for shorter hours carried on by the New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics, and Other Workingmen.

In accordance with a resolution passed in March, 1832, by the Boston branch of the New England Association, several trades in that city had made efforts during the spring to secure shorter hours. Not only ship carpenters and caulkers, but house carpenters, masons, painters, slaters, and sailmakers appear to have taken part in this demand. A meeting of "House and Ship Joiners" held about the middle of May, for example, resolved "that they would, so far as laid [*sic*] in their power, use every exertion to persuade their employers to allow their hands three hours instead of two, for their meals, during the hot months of summer, and also allow them to quit work on Saturdays at 6 o'clock P. M., commencing June 1st." [31] A week later a meeting of master carpenters resolved "to call a public meeting of the Master Carpenters, Masons, Painters and Slaters, . . . to take into consideration the expediency of altering the number of hours which are now considered as constituting a day's work." [32] This meeting, if it were ever held, undoubtedly condemned the ten-hour movement. The master sailmakers also met about this time and, after expressing disapprobation of "the measures and doings of the leaders of a combination now existing among the *journeymen* of this city," appointed a committee of four "to procure as many hands, as is necessary to continue our business, that are not pledged as to number of hours or price." [33]

Nothing further is heard of the other trades, but the agitation of the ship carpenters and caulkers of Boston and Charlestown led to a lockout, both of the members of the journeymen's association and of master mechanics employing members of the

31 Boston *Transcript*, May 19, 1832.
32 *Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot*, May 26, 1832.
33 Boston *Courier*, May 25, 1832.

association, which attracted a great deal of attention in the local press during the next few weeks.

As in the case of the Boston house carpenters in 1825, the merchants and shipowners, and not the master carpenters, took the lead in suppression of the strike. At a meeting on May 15 they adopted a set of resolutions signed by 106 persons, in which they declared that the adoption of a ten-hour day would seriously injure the business of shipbuilding in Boston, since "ship owners would repair their vessels elsewhere, rather than to submit to the inconvenience, delays, and vexations to which they would be exposed." They accordingly resolved that, after May 22, they would neither employ any journeyman who belonged to the "combination" nor give work to any master mechanic who should "employ them while they continue thus pledged to each other, and refuse to work during the hours that it has been as is now customary for other mechanics to work in this city." [34] To carry these resolutions into effect, the merchants are said to have subscribed $20,000.[35]

The journeymen ship carpenters replied by an address "to the Merchants of the City of Boston." They met the argument of the merchants and shipowners that the ten-hour day would drive the shipbuilding business from Boston by expressing their willingness "to labour by night or day, either on the railway or in the dock, to facilitate the business of the merchant, or our employer; the merchant or our employer agreeing to pay for each and every hour over and above ten, an extra compensation in proportion to our day's work." But they affirmed their decision that from March 20 to September 1, they would not work "more than ten hours per day, unless being paid extra for each and every hour." [36]

A week later, at a meeting of master carpenters and caulkers, the following agreement was signed by sixteen persons present — all the master carpenters and caulkers of Boston except two who refused to sign but agreed to recognise the binding power

[34] *Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot*, May 19, 1832; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 81, 82.

[35] Luther, *Address to the Working Men of New England* (1st ed.), 7. A writer in a local newspaper who signed himself "Observer" also stated that "a very large sum" had been subscribed "for the purpose of defraying the extra charges that may be necessary to carry their resolves into complete effect." *Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot*, May 23, 1832.

[36] *Ibid.*, May 23, 1832.

of the agreement: "We, the undersigned, Master Carpenters and Caulkers, do agree to abide by and support the resolutions of the Merchants of Boston in regard to the employment of journeymen who belong to any combination with respect to the time or price of labor." [37] The account of this meeting was accompanied by an advertisement for forty ship carpenters and caulkers, "not pledged to any combination respecting hours," in which the masters offered to pay "the expense of getting to Boston" and to give "constant employment for three months" at from $2 to $3 a day, according to the character of the work.[38] Thus the master mechanic recognised that his place was on the side of his employer — the merchant-capitalist.

This effort to establish the ten-hour day was evidently unsuccessful. But on July 20 the merchants of Boston issued a letter to the master carpenters and caulkers in which they stated that, "it being understood that the journeymen carpenters and caulkers have abandoned their combination to control the liberty of individuals, in the hours of labour," they might be allowed, considering the extreme heat and the cholera epidemic, to have "two hours intermission at noon during the present month and August,"—"it being expressly understood that they shall commence the day's work at sunrise, and terminate it at sunset." [39] "Here," exclaimed Seth Luther, who called this letter the "Cholera Ukase" and stated that the journeymen had already for some time been taking the two hours at noon, "is assumption of power without precedent in our country. Here is the 'Republicanism' of the Dark Ages." [40]

The third convention [41] of the New England Association met in October, 1833, in Boston. Some 25 delegates were present from 4 New England States,— Massachusetts, Maine, Rhode Island and Connecticut — and John Farrel,[42] of Pennsylvania, who had been "sent to the Convention for the purpose of ob-

37 *Ibid.*, May 30, 1832; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 86.

38 *Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot*, May 30, 1832.

39 Published in Luther, *Address to the Working Men of New England* (2nd ed.), 33, 34.

40 *Ibid.*

41 The proceedings of this convention were published in pamphlet form, 1,000 copies having been ordered printed for distribution. *Proceedings of the Working Men's Convention*, 1833 (Pamphlet).

42 John Farrel was one of the most prominent leaders of the Philadelphia trade union movement. See I, 373 *et seq.*, 427. His name appears in various spellings: Farrel, Ferral, and Ferrall.

taining information in relation to the working classes in New England," was "admitted as a member." The New Haven delegates later reported to their constituents that the convention was composed principally of farmers and mechanics, and that the "other great class of 'workingmen,' factory laborers, were mostly unrepresented." [43]

Committees were appointed on education, imprisonment for debt, the "condition of children in factories," and "the situation of the working women of this country." Reports were received from two committees — one on education and one on banks — which had been appointed at the convention of 1832, and from the committees on education and on imprisonment for debt appointed at this convention. In view of the fact that regulations were required "adapted to the particular circumstances and conditions of the different states," the committee on education recommended that committees be appointed in each State represented in the convention "to prepare and circulate for signatures, Memorials to the Legislatures of their respective states." It also recommended that the Committees on the condition of children in factories and on the condition of working women be united and instructed to prepare memorials on these subjects to be presented to the legislatures of all the New England States, and later the convention voted "that six hundred copies of a Memorial to be presented to the Legislature, on the subject of Children in Factories, etc.," be printed.

A motion to appoint a committee "to investigate the causes of the imprisonment of operatives by the *Thompsonville Manufacturing Company*" led to a spirited discussion, and was for a time laid on the table, but the committee was afterwards appointed. A strike of weavers had recently occurred in the plant of the Thompsonville Carpet Manufacturing Company, at Thompsonville, Connecticut, and the company had brought suit for damages against the leaders, the first such suit in the United States in connection with a labour dispute. The defendants were imprisoned on the charge of conspiracy to ruin the business of the company because it had refused to grant the increase in wages demanded, and for several years the case at-

[43] Carey's *Select Excerpta*, IV, 435.

tracted considerable attention.[44] The committee of the New England Association appointed to consider the subject reported "that in their opinion, the treatment of the weavers in that establishment, in July and August last, as represented in the documents referred to them, was arbitrary and oppressive — and deserves the reprobation of all working men — and in particular, that the use of the common jail in enforcing the regulations of a factory, made without the consent of those employed, is an alarming abuse of power, which ought to be resisted." It therefore recommended that a committee be appointed to prepare a statement of the facts for publication in the New England *Artisan,* "a paper published in Boston, devoted to the interests of the producing classes," and a committee of three was later appointed for that purpose.

A trades' union resolution was also laid on the table for a time but was afterwards taken up, amended, and adopted. This resolution, as originally presented, recommended "the Farmers, Mechanics, and Working Men of every description, in every town and city in New England, to form themselves into *Societies,* who are particularly recommended to appoint Corresponding Secretaries, whose duty it shall be to communicate with brethren of the same fraternity throughout New England, with a view to the establishment of *Trades Union,* who shall take cognisance of all subjects that directly interest the members of the respective associations."[45]

The question of national organisation came up in the form of a resolution offered by "Mr. Farrel of Pennsylvania." This resolution requested "the Working Men of the Middle States to call a Convention at such time and place as they may deem expedient — and that when assembled, they will take into consideration, the necessity of calling a National Convention, at some central point — to which Convention we pledge ourselves to send Delegates."

Though the exact purpose of this national convention was

44 Three separate trials took place in this case, which terminated in 1836 in a verdict for the defendants. This decision was rendered after the jury had been instructed that it is legal to combine to raise wages, but that it is unlawful to conspire to ruin an employer's business. *Doc. Hist.*, IV, Supplement. See below, I, 405 *et seq.*, for connected account of the labour conspiracy cases during the thirties.

45 Just how this resolution was amended does not appear in the proceedings of the Convention.

not defined, political action was distinctly contemplated at this time by the Association. A committee called attention to "the expediency of taking measures to redress the wrongs of the producing class, by recourse to the Ballot Box." And the president, in his address, gave a long list of political demands. Finally, the convention of 1833 endorsed and ordered published a letter from Samuel C. Allen in which he declined to be a "party" candidate for governor of Massachusetts. The endorsement of this letter, as will be seen, led to Allen's nomination for the governorship by the workingmen, and was the beginning of a state political movement.

The last convention of the New England Association, which met at Northampton, Massachusetts, in September, 1834, was overshadowed by the Massachusetts state political convention which met at the same place immediately afterwards.[46] A somewhat florid and rather indefinite address by the president [47] seems to be the only part of the proceedings of this convention preserved.

MASSACHUSETTS STATE CAMPAIGNS, 1833 AND 1834

The letter from Samuel C. Allen which was endorsed by the New England Association in 1833 declared that the interests of the producing class instead of the consuming class should be the "guiding star" of politics.[48] Allen was a former Jackson Democrat who had been a Congregational minister and a member of Congress and of the Governor's Council.[49] Nevertheless, shortly after the publication of this letter he was nominated for governor by the workingmen of Charlestown.

How far this movement extended in the State it is impossible to tell. Allen received only 504 votes in Boston, compared with 2,734 for Davis,[50] the successful candidate, and in 167 towns, apparently including Boston, Allen received 1,966 votes as compared with 18,931 for Davis.[51] More than a fourth of the workingmen's votes came from Boston. In Charlestown one of the legislative candidates was elected.[52]

46 See below, I. 317.

47 This address was published in the *National Trades' Union*, Oct. 4, 1834.

48 Allen's letter was published in the Boston *Courier* and also in the *Proceedings of the Working Men's Convention*, 1833.

49 Bradford, *Biographical Notices of Distinguished Men in New England*, 31, 32.

50 Boston *Courier*, Nov. 12, 1833.

51 Boston *Daily Advertiser and Patriot*, Nov. 14, 1833.

52 Boston *Courier*, Nov. 12, 1833.

In Lowell the Working Men's party, which professed to represent the interests of "the manufacturers, mechanics and workingmen," endorsed Allen for governor and put up twelve candidates for the House of Representatives, "selected," according to its own statement, "without reference to the doings of any other party whatever." [53] Of these 12 candidates, 5 were also on the Democratic Republican, and 4 on the National Republican ticket, while 2 appear to have dropped out before the election. The place of one of these was supplied by Kirk Boott,[54] agent of one of the corporations, who was also on the National Republican ticket. The only 2 candidates who were exclusively on the workingmen's ticket received respectively 128 and 130 votes.[55] But all of the workingmen's candidates who were also on other tickets appear to have been elected.

In 1833 there had been no state convention, but in 1834 a regular convention held immediately after the adjournment of the New England Association, again nominated Samuel C. Allen for governor and a farmer and ex-president of the New England Association for lieutenant-governor.[56] The number present at this convention was said to have been only fourteen.[57] But a committee was appointed which later issued an "Address to the Workingmen of Massachusetts." [58] This address warned the workingmen not to "be deceived by wolves in sheep's clothing," but to form their judgment of men "by the evidence of their past lives and of their daily practices. Sudden conversions," it said, "whether in religion or politics, are seldom to be relied on." Finally the committee recommended to the workingmen, not only of Massachusetts, but of New England, "the formation of town and county associations, under a regular organisation, that shall hold stated meetings for the discussion of the affairs of government, and maintain so far as practicable a correspondence with each other."

53 Lowell *Mercury*, Nov. 8, 1833.

54 According to Seth Luther, one Lowell man, referred to as "Mr. W. G.," was discharged for having attended the Providence meeting of the New England Association on Dec. 5, 1831, in retaliation for which "the Working men of Lowell turned Mr. K. B. (Agent at Lowell) out of the Legislature of Massachusetts and put Mr. W. G. in his place." Luther, *Address to the Working Men of New England* (1st ed.), 24.

55 Lowell *Mercury*, Nov. 28, 1833. This was said to be a falling of about 100 votes "from the previous trial."

56 *National Trades' Union*, Sept. 27, 1834.

57 Boston *Courier*, Nov. 19, 1834; quoted from the Springfield *Republican*.

58 This address was published in the *National Trades' Union*, Nov. 1, 1834.

This political movement appears not only to have been weak numerically but to have taken its candidates mainly from the Democratic party. The "mechanics, artisans and other workingmen" of Boston, for example, nominated for Congress, William Foster,[59] son of a prominent Boston merchant and slaveholder, who had lived in France and was said to have been president of a Jacobin club during the French Revolution.[60] In making this nomination the workingmen declared that their intentions were to benefit themselves —"to give to productive labour its rightful weight and influence in the councils of the nation, and not to promote the interests of any party, aside from the greatest good to the greatest number." "The time has come," they said, "when the producing classes in the United States are in duty bound to assume the management of their own affairs, and no longer leave them to the control of their enemies." But both Allen and Foster were old hands in party politics and both had been Democrats.[61]

Ridicule and misrepresentation were employed by the opposition. "There must be an equal distribution," said the Boston *Courier*, "of the fruits of labor. The real laborer must divide his earnings with his idle neighbour if he be a 'working man' in order that there be no monopoly."[62] The *Courier* also ridiculed Foster's pretensions to the character of a "working man,"[63] and charged that "Jacksonism and Toryism were at the foundation" of the workingmen's political party in Massachusetts.[64]

The result was decidedly discouraging, for the number of votes received by Allen was said to have been "hardly worth naming as scattering."[65]

Thus ended the career of this second movement of "furrow turners" and "huge paws," as the farmers and workingmen were frequently called in the contemporary press of Massachusetts. But the next year a "great battle" is said to have occurred at Faneuil Hall between "the St. Tammanies and

59 Boston *Courier*, Nov. 4, 1834.

60 Pierce, *Foster Genealogy*, 954–956.

61 A workingmen's county convention at Deerfield, Franklin County, endorsed the nominations made by the state convention, nominated a candidate for Congress and one for the State Senate, and passed thirteen resolutions, most of which, according to the Boston *Courier*, "breathe the fiercest spirit of Jacobinism." Boston *Courier*, Oct. 24, 1834.

62 *Ibid.*, Oct. 27, 1834.

63 *Ibid.*, Nov. 4, 1834.

64 *Ibid.*, Nov. 7, 1834.

65 *Ibid.*, Nov. 19, 1834; quoted from the Springfield *Republican*.

the Loco Focos in Boston"—"the Jackson party proper, and the Workingmen, or, as they are called, the Custom House party and the Hard Hands."[66] And this movement probably led up to the "Loco-Foco" party, just as did the trade union movement in New York.

INDUSTRIAL AND POLITICAL DEMANDS

Most of the political issues brought forward by the Working Men's party reappeared later, not only in the Massachusetts state campaigns of 1833 and 1834, but even in the convention proceedings of the New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics, and Other Workingmen. This association, though at first rather an industrial than a political organisation, eventually advocated a mechanics' lien law, reform in the militia system, simplification of the laws, extension of the suffrage, reform in the land tenure laws, in the system of taxation, and in banks and other incorporated monopolies, abolition of imprisonment for debt, protection of labour instead of capital, factory legislation, especially in the interest of women and children, a better system of education, in particular, provision for the education of children in factory districts, and shorter hours of labour. The purely political questions appear not to have come up until the second convention, but education, especially the education of children in factory districts, was from the first of equal rank with hours of labour. And this question maintained its importance throughout the entire history of the Association.

In the New England Association comparatively little attention was given to mechanics' liens, the militia system, and the simplification of the laws, and these may have been included rather in imitation of the Working Men's party than because they formed any essential part of its own programme. Nevertheless the second convention considered "the expedience of a lien law which shall protect the property of the actual labourers as well as their employers, the master workmen," and of "a reform in the present militia system so as to make it less burdensome for the labouring classes."[67]

[66] Boston *Courier*, Nov. 9, 1835.

[67] *Free Enquirer*, Sept. 22, 1832.

Extension of the suffrage was an issue which it had not been necessary to raise in Philadelphia or New York. But Rhode Island still lagged behind other States in the establishment of universal manhood suffrage and the first convention of the Association therefore endorsed, in general, the efforts of all who were struggling for "the extension of the right of suffrage in those states where the people are now denied its essential privileges." [68] The third convention also passed a resolution expressing the hope that "our brethren, the working men of Rhode Island" might succeed in their struggle for "the right of electing their own rulers," and "be enabled to place such men in power as will advance the interests of the productive class." [69]

Upon the tariff the attitude of the members of the New England Association was probably strongly influenced by recent exposures of the evils of the factory system as existing even in this country and by free trade arguments put forward on behalf of factory operatives. For about this time Seth Luther, the first American in the anti-child-labour crusade, and a man who, according to his own account, had "for years lived among cotton mills, worked in them, travelled among them," was endeavouring to stir up New England by his descriptions of the factory system and by his argument that only free trade could prevent the growth in this country of the evils which had recently been so graphically described in England. Seth Luther's *Address to the Working Men of New England* was delivered in Boston, Charlestown, Cambridgeport, Waltham, and Dorchester, Massachusetts; in Portland and Saco, Maine; and in Dover, New Hampshire; and undoubtedly had considerable influence over the labour movement of the period, particularly over the New England Association.

At any rate in 1833 the committee on banking of the New England Association expressed agreement with the advocates of the "American System" on "the importance of retaining specie in the country . . . although not on the means." "It is labor and industry," declared this committee, "which require protection, and not capital. Protection is sometimes

[68] *Ibid.*, Sept. 22, 1832.
[69] *Proceedings of the Working Men's Convention*, 1833.

asked in the *name* of industry, but it is waylaid and monopolised by capital; leaving industry to protect itself, under the levelling influence of competition — while capital alone is guarded from the effects of competition." [70]

The same reasons that led the New England Association to oppose the "American System" caused it to take from the beginning as one of its principal demands the new issue of factory legislation. "A large proportion of the operatives in our factories," said the call for the second convention, "are, and must continue to be, a helpless population. It is indispensable that they should be put under the unremitted supervision and protection of the law of the land." [71] And in the factory business "which presents so fair an outside show," the workingmen of Massachusetts found "perhaps the most alarming evil that afflicts our country. The cheapness and facility of procuring the manufactured articles," they said, "are no recompense for their injury to the health and the morals of the rising generation. To look at the pale and dirty, and spiritless beings, as they pour out of the factory to their hurried meals at the sound of a bell; and, although inhumanly stinted as to time, to see the lazy motion of their jaded limbs, and the motionless expression of their woebegone countenances, must give a pang to the feeling heart which can never be forgotten. This factory system is essentially opposed to the spirit of our institutions, since from its nature, it must throw large bodies of people together, and by degrees render them wholly dependent upon a few employers, and forever crush that spirit of independence which is the only safeguard of freedom." [72]

The "condition of females and children in factories" attracted particular attention, and the New England Association declared that this subject "ought to receive the sedulous care of the respective departments of government." "If children must be doomed to those deadly prisons," said the New Haven delegates to the 1833 convention, "let the law at least protect them against excessive toil, and shed a few rays of light upon their darkened intellects. 'Workingmen!' bitter must be that bread which *your* little children earn in pain and tears, toiling

70 *Proceedings of the Working Men's Convention*, 1833.

71 *To the Workingmen of New England.*

72 *National Trades' Union*, Nov. 1, 1834; *Address to the Workingmen of Massachusetts.*

by day, sleepless at night, sinking under oppression, consumption and decrepitude, into an early grave, knowing no life but this, and knowing of this only misery." [73] And a resolution of the convention of 1832 declared that "children should not be allowed to labor in the factories from morning till night, without any time for healthy recreation and mental culture; as it not only endangers their own well being and health, but ensures to the country the existence of a population, in the approaching generation, unfitted to enjoy the privileges and to exercise the duties of citizens and freemen." [74]

In the later political movement in Massachusetts, also, the evils of child labour were frequently dwelt upon. The Rev. Henry Colman, in his letter read at the workingmen's convention of Franklin County, took a strong stand upon this subject. "I would lay the most severe restrictions," he said, "against parents selling their children as slaves to our large manufacturing institutions, and employing boys and girls of the tender age of nine and ten years to work in the noisy, and confined, and unwholesome atmosphere of a manufactory or a steam furnace from twelve to fourteen hours per day, for the sake of furnishing their manufactures at a price altogether inadequate to their value; or enriching themselves by this violent competition at the most serious waste of the health, and morals and lives of the operatives; converting these children into mere machines, whose condition in after life must be dependent on the caprices and fluctuations of fashion and trade, or at the mercy of some individual or corporation; since thus trained from their childhood they become disqualified or certainly are not fitted for any other occupation or mode of livelihood." [75]

As in the Working Men's party the first and foremost political demand of the New England Association was for a better system of education, but unlike that party the Association laid chief stress upon the education of factory children. "The want of education," was declared by a resolution adopted at the first convention, to be "the great and original cause of the present comparative degradation of Mechanics and Working Men in this country." [76] And the Connecticut delegates to the 1833

73 Clipping in Carey's *Select Excerpta*, IV, 435.
74 *Ibid.*
75 Boston *Courier*, Nov. 4, 1834.
76 *Free Enquirer*, June 16, 1832.

convention complained that, though a great deal of money was spent on education, the plan in use was adapted to the "ecclesiastical aristocracy" established by the first settlers. In the common schools, as originally established, and apparently as still existing, the catechism was said to be the principal subject taught, after reading and writing, and no instruction was given "upon the principles of just government, or upon the rights and duties of citizens." [77]

Later the term "republican education," which had become well-known through the Working Men's party of New York, was used by a committee on education of the New England Association, which declared itself in favour of "manual labour schools, free for all, at the expense of each state." This committee also urged the need "of teaching the true principles of a republican government in addition to elementary education"; and recommended that another committee be appointed to draft a memorial to the legislatures of the New England States "on the subject of a General System of Education by means of Manual Labour Schools." [78] The first step toward the establishment of such a system, in the opinion of the members of this committee was to "enlighten the community" on the necessity of "a political regeneration."

As for the education of children in manufacturing districts, the committee which reported upon that subject to the first convention of the New England Association declared that it had come to the "unanimous opinion, that the opportunities allowed to children and youth employed in manufactories, to obtain an education suitable to the character of American freemen, and the *wives* and *mothers* of such, are altogether inadequate to the purpose." The committee finally recommended that memorials be sent to the Legislatures of the different States praying "for some wholesome regulations with regard to the education of children and youth employed in manufactories." [79] At the second convention, also, one of the topics considered was: "The improvement of the present system of education among the people — with special reference to the internal economy of factories." [80]

77 Carey's *Select Excerpta*, IV, 435.

78 *Proceedings of the Working Men's Convention*, 1833.

79 *Free Enquirer*, June 14, 1832; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 195–199.

80 *Free Enquirer*, Sept. 22, 1832.

The members of the committee on education which reported to the 1833 convention appear to have realised that a long campaign of education would be necessary before such a system as they advocated would be adopted. "We have," they said, "a powerful opposition to meet; talents and wealth, prejudice and ancient usage, are against us; the dread of innovation will enervate some, and the fear of ridicule will discourage others. The clergy will be tampered with; the control of our schools and colleges will be retained by those who do not think or feel as we do: they indeed possess that book-learning, which has been *thought* the great requisite for scholastic honours and duties; our uneducated, but practical men, may know what they want, but they will, through modesty, yield to *supposed* superiors the arrangement of forms and systems, which is in fact to yield the whole ground. . . . It is not for this committee to speak disrespectfully of books; for they contain the experience of ages and the seeds of wisdom; but they have been used, also, for purposes so adverse to the interests of the people, that it behooves us to guard against the false and pernicious application of book-learning."

That the "distinction between rich and poor" was "carried in a remarkable degree into the business of school education" was also one of the complaints of the Massachusetts workingmen in their political convention of 1834. "Private schools, academies, and colleges," they said, "are instituted for the better instruction of such as have the money to pay for it. The consequence is, that those who are most able to give a suitable attention to the improvement of common schools, take no interest in them whatever, except to have them conducted with the least possible expense." They also complained that "females in an especial manner are educated to consider all useful employment, or any avocation by which their fair hands may contribute toward their own support, to be a positive degradation." [81]

Compulsory education does not appear to have been one of the official demands. But in a letter read at the political convention of workingmen of Franklin County the Rev. Henry

[81] *National Trades' Union*, Nov. 1, 1834; *Address to the Workingmen of Massachusetts.*

Colman declared that he would "probably go even farther" than they did,— that he would not only "have the state provide in the most liberal manner for the education of the people" but would also "have every parent or guardian compelled under severe penalties to send their children to school." [82]

As education was the chief political demand so leisure was the chief industrial demand of the New England Association. Yet even here appeal was finally made to the political forum. For though the Association at first attempted to establish the ten-hour day by direct action, the first convention, as has been seen, recommended that the vigilance committees in the different States send memorials to their state legislatures asking for a legal limitation of hours to ten a day. And the New Haven delegates to the convention of 1833 emphasised in their report the need for "a law regulating the *hours of labor,* especially for mechanics, and above all for women and children in factories. . . ." "We are persuaded," they said, "that nothing will in the end be lost by the employers — that much will be gained by those employed — if the hours of labor are so regulated by law as to afford leisure for the preservation of health and the cultivation of the mind." [83]

The arguments advanced for shorter hours were chiefly the physical hardship of a long day's labour and the desire for leisure for self-improvement. "Must a man, because he is poor and a mechanic," asked the Boston *Transcript,* speaking of the New England Association and its demand for a ten-hour day, "go through the drudgery of day labour in the hot and wearying days of midsummer, without respite, from daylight till long after the tired sun has sunk behind the hills? Has he no feeling that he cannot perceive the scorching and penetrating rays of the sun?" After working fifteen or sixteen hours in the long days of summer, argued the *Transcript,* a man goes home little prepared "for any mental requisition or enjoyment," and must devote the "remaining hours of the night" "to needful slumbers, so that he may at daylight, trudge off to his unceasing round of laborious exertion. But let the mechanic's labour be over when he has wrought ten or twelve hours in the long days of summer, and he will be able to return to his

82 Boston *Courier,* Nov. 4, 1834. 83 Carey's *Select Excerpta,* IV, 485.

family in season, and with sufficient vigour, to pass some hours in the instruction of his children, or in the improvement of his own mind." [84]

The arguments against a ten-hour day are well illustrated by those put forward during the ship carpenters' strike of 1832. In an address "To the Public," [85] the merchants and ship owners of Boston asserted, not only that "the time thus proposed to be thrown away would be a serious loss to this active community," but that "the habits likely to be generated by the indulgence of idleness in our summer mornings, and afternoons will be very detrimental to [the journeymen] individually, and very costly to us as a community." They feared that, should the journeymen succeed, their example "will probably be followed by thousands who are now contentedly and industriously pursuing their avocations, and thus produce an incalculable injury to the whole people."

A large part of the opposition to shorter hours for mechanics was due, according to Seth Luther,[86] to the fear on the part of the manufacturers of New England that the movement would spread to the factory operatives. Mill owners, he declared, in their eagerness to keep the "contagion" of the demand for shorter hours out of the factories, "go into the shop of the Carpenter, and others who carry on business, and actually *forbid* them to employ what they sneeringly call *'ten hour men.'*"

84 Boston *Transcript*, Feb. 20, 1832.
85 Boston *Courier*, June 5, 1832.
86 Luther, *Address to the Working Men of New England* (1st ed.), 24.

CHAPTER VI

RESULTS OF THE AWAKENING

Causes of failure of American labour parties, 326. Important results, 327. Public school system, 327. Abolition of imprisonment for debt, 328. Reform of militia system, 329. Reform of banking system, 330. Factory legislation and restriction of hours, 331. Progress toward democracy, 331.

American labour parties have always failed as a result of one or more of the following causes: a change from industrial depression to prosperity, which turns the workers' attention from politics to trade unionism; "legitimate" internal dissensions due to lack of unity of purpose which is in its turn generally due to a heterogeneous composition of the party; "illegitimate" internal dissensions started and nurtured by professional politicians of the old parties, who worm themselves into the new party, either for the purpose of controlling it, or else of breaking it up before it becomes a menace, and who generally succeed in accomplishing their purpose, sometimes by a deliberate confusion of the issues, sometimes by playing upon the ambitions of the legitimate leaders, and sometimes by other similar means; the activities of the open enemies of the party who, through slander, appeal to traditional party spirit, and in other ways, make war on the new party "to the knife"; the inexperience of the legitimate leaders in the matter of selecting candidates and, in general, of running a political party; and, last but not least, the taking up of some of its most popular demands by one of the old parties. All of these causes contributed to the breakdown of this first effort of the workingmen of the United States to secure the material benefits of citizenship.

Yet in spite of misrepresentation without and discord within the Working Men's party was not wholly unsuccessful even during its brief career. "Many of the reforms called for by the Working Men," said their party organ late in 1830,[1] "are

[1] New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Dec. 11, 1830; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 182.

now acknowledged to be just and reasonable, and are even advocated by several of the presses which have hitherto supported the party in power, and there is little doubt that the ensuing session of the legislature will relieve them from a share of their oppressive burdens."

The most important results of this movement, however, were not attained until after its death, and then appeared to be, and in part undoubtedly were, due to the work of later reformers and other political parties. This was because measures originally advocated by the Working Men's party were later taken up by other parties, bidding for votes, and were used by them both to dissipate the strength of the independent working-class movement and to build up their own popularity. For the agitation by the Working Men's party of evils which needed legislative remedies was a powerful factor in the creation of that public opinion which moulds the ideas of legislators.

The demands of the workingmen were for that time decidedly radical, but the results finally achieved are now looked back upon with pride by conservative people. For our great public school system of to-day, for example, we owe a large if unrecognised debt of gratitude to this first effort of the working class to exercise independently its citizenship. As Carlton [2] states: "The vitality of the movement for tax-supported schools was derived, not from the humanitarian leaders, but from the growing class of wage-earners."

In Pennsylvania, for example, though the exact part played by the Working Men's party in procuring a democratic public school system cannot be estimated, two facts stand out prominently in the history of the movement for such a system. First, in spite of a direct injunction in the constitution that the Legislature establish public schools, and in spite of the recommendations of a long line of governors, no public school law was passed until 1834 when, though the Working Men's party was dead, the workingmen themselves were still a powerful political factor. Second, before the emergence of the Working Men's party the idea had been to educate in the public schools only children whose parents were too poor to educate them privately, or, in other words, to establish a system of charity schools.

2 Carlton, *Economic Influences upon Educational Progress in the United States.*

But after the committee of the Working Men's party made its report on public education the idea of charity schools was abandoned for the workingmen's idea of schools in which the children of the rich and of the poor should be educated side by side.[3]

In New York, too, though the public school system was not established in the city until 1842 and in the State until 1849, the Working Men's party undoubtedly gave the movement for free schools a strong impetus. And in spite of the violent denunciation heaped upon the plan of "state guardianship," the idea of industrial, or, more properly, of vocational, education, which originated in this working-class political movement, spread rapidly. Many "manual labour" schools, similar in general character to Fellenberg's Manual Labour Academy at Hofwyl, Switzerland, and attempting to teach agriculture and the mechanic arts on model farms where the students lived, worked and studied, were actually started in various parts of the country. In 1833 a bill was introduced in the Pennsylvania legislature for the establishment of a "State Manual Labour Academy" in which "agricultural, mechanical, intellectual and moral instruction" was to be given to students between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one.[4] And in the same year a memorial on the subject of manual labour schools was sent to Congress.[5] But most of the so-called "manual labour" schools were theological schools or small colleges in which manual labour was not introduced primarily for educational purposes, but merely furnished a method of enabling the students to earn their living while obtaining an education. The need, therefore, so clearly seen by the workingmen, for specific education for agriculture and the industries was left unfilled until comparatively recent times.

The abolition of imprisonment for debt, though even then advocated by a large and growing body of reformers, including such men as Thomas Herttell of New York and the members

[3] The credit for the establishment of public schools in Pennsylvania is usually given to the three governors, Governor Schulze (1823–1829), Governor Wolf (1829–1835), and Governor Ritner (1835–1838), and to the Hon. Thaddeus Stevens, a political opponent of Governor Wolf, who, nevertheless, valiantly defended his public school act. See Sharpless, *Two Centuries of Pennsylvania History*, 302.

[4] The *Co-operator*, Apr. 6, 1833.

[5] *Ibid.*, Feb. 23 and Mar. 9, 1833.

of the Prison Discipline Society of Boston, was undoubtedly hastened by the strong and general support which it received from the Working Men's party. Both before and during this period imprisonment for debt is said to have been denounced by "almost every governor in New England" and its continuance was attributed to "a secret influence among us, which works behind the curtain, and controls our reason and interest." [6] Though Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland and Connecticut lagged behind,[7] State after State came into line during this period and by the time the Working Men's party finally disintegrated this relic of the past had been practically abolished in most of the States and the general sentiment against it was so strong that its end was only a matter of time.

The question of mechanics' liens, like that of imprisonment for debt, had already been a subject of public discussion for some time and was ripe for action. Before the organisation of the Working Men's party the agitation had been carried on principally by and in behalf of master mechanics,[8] and as a result the laws enacted had given a lien to the master mechanic but not to the journeyman. But the organisation of the Working Men's party in New York State, as has already been seen, led almost immediately to the enactment of a mechanics' lien law which applied both to masters and to journeymen. Though this law was not entirely satisfactory, as it applied only to the city and county of New York,[9] no law probably would have been passed at this time had not the Working Men's party been organised. Nevertheless, the demand for a mechanics' lien law is said to have been early recognised by the old parties as "perfectly reasonable." [10]

This movement also appears to have given considerable impetus to the reform of the militia system. As early as 1830 the legislatures of some States had abolished military parades; [11] the next year it was announced that Delaware had

[6] New York *Working Man's Advocate*, July 31, 1830; quoted from the Woodstock *Observer*. Also in the *Working Man's Gazette*, Sept. 23, 1830.

[7] Prison Discipline Society, *Tenth Annual Report*, 1835, p. 10.

[8] For ten years, it was said, the builders of New York State had annually petitioned the legislature for a lien law. New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Jan. 9, 1830.

[9] *Mechanics' Press*, May 8, 1830. Ohio passed a mechanics' lien law in 1832. The text of this law was printed in full in the *Working Men's Shield*, Jan. 5, 1833.

[10] New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Dec. 5, 1829; quoted from the *Mechanics' Free Press*.

[11] *Mechanics' Free Press*, Jan. 2, 1830.

abolished her militia law altogether and that other States were preparing either to follow her example or to modify their laws; [12] and in 1832 President Jackson declared in his annual message that the whole subject ought to be thoroughly examined.[13] Nevertheless, in 1830 in New York State a bill which would have reduced the time spent in militia trainings from two whole days to one afternoon [14] failed of passage in the legislature; and in 1832 [15] and again in 1834 [16] the workingmen of that State complained that, in spite of protests, the odius system still existed.

The workingmen's severe and insistent criticisms of the banking system might with profit have been remembered and seriously considered when the crash came in 1837. If their protests had been heeded earlier many of the evil results of unregulated banking might have been avoided. Yet even during the lifetime of the Working Men's party some attention was paid to the need of reforming the banking system. In 1830, for example, a resolution was introduced into Congress "by Mr. Potter, declaring the system of paper money and banking generally, to be oppressive to the industrious classes, and dangerous to our national liberty." [17] And in some States, relief was actually obtained from the small note evil. A Pennsylvania law prohibiting the circulation of "one dollar promises" [18] was said to have brought "a clear gain of twenty per cent . . . to the productive part of the community." "No longer," said a writer in the *Mechanics' Free Press*,[19] "do our employers put off to us in payment for our wages, the ragged promises they could not otherwise dispose of. No longer are our wives obliged to resort to the brokers to get their notes changed into merchantable money, at a loss of from five to ten per cent before they could purchase the articles necessary for

12 *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Dec. 22, 1831.

13 Richardson, *Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789–1897*, Vol. II, 603.

14 *Mechanics' Press*, Feb. 27, 1830; quoted from the Albany *Daily Advocate*.

15 *Working Men's Shield*, Oct. 6, 1832.

16 *National Trades' Union*, Sept. 6, 1834. There was a long editorial on the subject in this paper on Dec. 6, 1834. Though the militia system was declared to be "very unequal and unjust in its operations, and a prominent subject for reform," it was proposed to raise "a corps of Mechanics to take the name of the Trades' Union Guards, and be attached to the parade at celebrations, etc."

17 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, May 22, 1830.

18 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Feb. 21, 1829.

19 *Ibid.*, Apr. 11, 1829; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 48.

subsistence." And the passage of this law was attributed by one writer to the workingmen's political movement. "They have already," said this writer, "evinced a disposition to pay attention to our grievances, by driving out of circulation the one dollar *promises,* and will continue to do so as long as the Working People continue united in their political associations." [20]

As for factory legislation and the legal restriction of hours of labour, the Working Men's party, and particularly the New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics, and Other Workingmen, did pioneer work. In Massachusetts the first investigation into the relation between child labour and school attendance was made in 1825,[21] but it was not until 1836 that the first child labour law was passed. In Pennsylvania, perhaps largely as a result of the attention called to this subject in the *Mechanics' Free Press,* the evils of child labour in factories were made the subject of legislative consideration in 1832 and again in 1837. Yet not until some years later did the legal regulation of hours of labour receive serious attention in any State. In general, *laissez-faire* was the ruling principle on these subjects throughout this period.

In conclusion, though the Working Men's party had little success in electing its candidates to office and though its immediate tangible results were small, it succeeded in forcing its measures into the foreground of public attention, and eventually all the specific evils of which it complained were abolished and all its constructive measures were passed. Public schools, free from the taint of charity, have been established throughout the country; general acts of incorporation have been substituted for the special acts which warranted calling all incorporated companies, monopolies; the currency has been placed upon a more sound basis; mechanics' lien laws have been passed; and the lottery system, imprisonment for debt, and compulsory militia service have been abolished. Trade unions, though they have since been sometimes declared "conspiracies in restraint of trade," have been freed from the old law which made their mere existence a conspiracy; prison labour has been regu-

20 Letter from Simon Snyder, Jr., who was apparently the son of a former governor of the State, in *Mechanics' Free Press,* Feb. 21, 1829.

21 For the report of the Massachusetts legislative committee appointed in 1825, see *Doc. Hist.,* V, 57–61.

lated; it has become customary not only for the municipality, but also for the State and the nation, to limit the hours of labour of public employés; even in private employment the hours of women and children, and in some cases those of men, have been regulated; and child labour in its worst forms has been practically abolished. Some of these issues, to be sure, are not yet completely or satisfactorily settled, but on the other hand many of the demands of the workingmen of this period are now taken for granted as fundamental rights. The Working Men's party, in short, was a distinct factor in pushing forward measures which even conservative people now recognise to have been in the line of progress toward real democracy.

PART THREE

TRADE UNIONISM (1833–1839)

By Edward B. Mittelman

CHAPTER I

THE TURN TO TRADE UNIONISM

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FROM MUTUAL INSURANCE TO TRADE PROTECTION

With the breakup of the workingmen's parties during 1831 and 1832, the labour movement temporarily ceased. There remained only the isolated trade societies, some of which had been in existence for over a quarter of a century. A silent change, however, was taking place. Heretofore labour organised primarily to protect its members against sickness and distress. Hence most of the trade societies were benevolent societies. During these years of rest the old benevolent societies metamorphosed into trade unions.

This change occurred in several ways. In some instances the old societies fell to pieces and in others they were reduced to a subordinate place to make room for the new. The New York Typographical Society which had been in existence since 1809 was for the first nine years both a benevolent and a trade

society. In 1818 it took out a charter and became only benevolent. But in 1831 it was reduced to secondary importance by the appearance of the New York Typographical Association. The purpose of the latter organisation, unlike that of the former, was "to elevate the character and advance the interest of the profession, by maintaining a just and uniform scale of prices for their labour." [1] The Philadelphia Typographical Society, organised in 1802 and incorporated in 1810 as a benevolent society, gave way to the Philadelphia Typographical Association in 1833 whose "primary and paramount intention" was "the determination and support of adequate wages for journeymen printers." [2] In both New York and Philadelphia the old societies continued but not as trade unions.

The Pennsylvania Society of Journeymen Cabinet-Makers of Philadelphia presents an instance of a different type. This society, which was started in 1806 and incorporated in 1825, was at first purely benevolent in character. It required dues of 12½ cents each month "for the benefit of the Society," and of 6¼ cents each meeting "for the benefit of the house wherein we shall meet," and made special provision for the care of funds over $100. There was also an admission fee of $2, and provision for various fines. Funeral benefits of $40 were paid, and after a funeral the funds were replenished by a special assessment levied on each surviving member. The constitution also authorised a sort of fire insurance by the article which provided that, in case any member sustained a loss by fire, the society should contribute, "as they may think proper," to repair such loss. But the revised constitution of 1829 stated the object of the organisation to be "to establish a stated price, as a criterion for workmen to endeavour to settle all disputes which may arise between them and their employers, in an amicable and satisfactory manner." One of the duties of the "standing committee" was to "make out bills for members unacquainted with the book of prices," and one of the duties of the corresponding secretary was to "endeavour to procure work for all

1 Stewart, *A Documentary History of the Early Organizations of Printers*, in U. S. Department of Labor, *Bulletin*, No. XI, 894–900, and Appendix I, No. 5.

2 *Ibid.*, 902, and note. See: George E. Barnett, *The Printers, a Study in American Trade Unionism*, in American Economic Association, *Publications*, third ser., X, No. 3, chap. i.

foreigners who wish to become members of the Society." Special provision was made in the by-laws for reports to "the next ensuing meeting" from "any member appointed on an arbitration by a member of the Society, in order to settle any difference between him and his employer." Apparently it was the custom for such disputes to be submitted to arbitration. National affiliations are also suggested by the special provision for admission to the society of "any person presenting a certificate from any Society in the United States with whom this Society shall hold correspondence." [3]

Of special interest is the evolution of the organisation of the New York tailors. The transformation of the Benevolent Society of Journeymen Tailors into a trade society did not occur until 1833. In that year the more militant members broke away and formed an organisation of their own under the name of the Union Trade Society of Journeymen Tailors. But even the first organisation did not remain entirely benevolent. It favoured, and later joined with a city central union.[4] The second organisation, however, was the aggressive one. It subsequently conducted a strike which lasted almost a half year and which resulted in the arrest of twenty of its members for conspiracy.[5] This was the most minutely regulated trade society of which we have a record. Members who did not attend meetings after receiving notice to do so were fined $5. Any man who did not subscribe to the list of prices was turned out of the society. No one was to work for a shop engaging men who were not members of the society. No journeymen could work for two shops under a penalty of $2 for each offence. Members who refused to serve on committees appointed to watch shops were fined $5.[6]

Most of the trades, however, combined both functions in one society. In addition to providing benefits of one sort or another they attempted to protect their trade. The Philadelphia cordwainers, working on men's shoes and known as the United Beneficial Society of Journeymen Cordwainers, held a meeting

[3] Journeymen Cabinet-Makers of the City of Philadelphia, *Constitution* (Philadelphia, 1829).

[4] *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, July 26, 1833; *National Trades' Union*, Aug. 15, 1835.

[5] See below, I, 408 *et. seq.*

[6] *Public Ledger*, May 30, 1836, copied from New York *Evening Transcript*.

on March 30, 1835, to bring in all non-members. Resolutions were adopted urging all mechanics "to join immediately whether it be viewed in reference to the protection of trade and wages — or in regard to the benefit derived therefrom in case of sickness and death." [7] Two months later the union voted to strike for higher wages.[8]

THE MERCHANT-CAPITALIST

The shift from mutual insurance to trade protection antedated by a few years the wave of industrial prosperity which came about the middle of the thirties. Its underlying cause is found in the permanent economic changes affecting the wage bargain.

The market by this time had outgrown the limitations of the master mechanic working with one or two journeymen in a small shop, perhaps with a retail store attached. The improved highways, canals, and, in some instances, railroads, were drawing together the hitherto isolated communities and converting them into an industrial unit. At the same time the cities were growing into substantial population centres.[9] The new order of things demanded a reorganisation of industry, and this was effected under the domination of the merchant-capitalist.

The merchant-capitalist gained control not only of the market, but also, to a certain extent, of the productive process as well. Excepting the textile industry, no important technical changes had been made in any of the industries. Hand tools still continued to be used, yet the orders had become wholesale. In order to be able to fill them, the middleman contracted with the master mechanics, who hitherto worked on their own account. He bought the raw material, had the skilled parts performed, perhaps, at his place of business, and let the rest out to them to be completed at their shops. In some instances he even sent his work to neighbouring villages. In 1833, during a strike of the Baltimore hatters against a 25 per cent cut in wages, the hat manufacturers justified the reduction on the ground that they were getting the work done in neighbouring towns at the price they were still offering. "Owing to the nature of the charges for this work," they said, "hundreds of dollars are an-

[7] *Pennsylvanian*, Apr. 4, 1835. [8] *Ibid.*, June 11, 1835. [9] See above, I. 176, 177.

nually sent to the neighbouring towns where it is done at the price we now offer, the persons performing it, furnishing their own shops, tools, fuel, etc., without additional charges." [10] In this process the masters were reduced to mere contractors. They became sweat-shop bosses.

Sometimes the merchant-capitalists let the work out directly to journeymen without the intervention of the boss. To prevent abuses the journeymen tailors of New York had a rule directing each employer "to keep a slate, and enter on it the names of their journeymen as they successively took out their jobs." No one was to take a job "out of his turn, and no one to have a second job until all had been supplied, etc." [11] The Philadelphia cordwainers' society, working on ladies' shoes, went so far as to adopt a rule binding itself for any loss an employer might sustain as a result of giving out work. "Should any member of this society," read a section of its by-laws, "take out work from an employer of the City and County of Philadelphia, and shall dishonourably embezzle, destroy, or appropriate said work for his own gain or use . . . this society does and will feel itself bound . . . to indemnify said employer. . . ." [12]

The effect of these changes on the journeymen was deleterious. The merchant-capitalist instigated competition between the masters not only of one community but of several communities. Not bound to any one community, he even resorted to the prisons, and in that way lowered still further the level of competition. The competitive pressure forced upon the masters was in turn passed on by them to the journeymen. They cut wages and used cheaper labour. Apprenticed labour now came often to mean child labour and unskilled labour, and a larger number of women entered profitable employments. The journeymen now competed with children, unskilled labour, women and convicts for the same job.

Under the new system, in which the skilled parts of the trade were performed at the place of business of the merchant-capitalist and the rest at the shops of master mechanics or at the homes of journeymen, trades were rapidly split up. The boy

[10] Baltimore *Republican and Commercial Advertiser*, July 29, 1833.

[11] New York *Courier and Enquirer*, May 31, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, IV. 315.

[12] *Pennsylvanian*, July 30, 1835.

who was bound out for 5, 6, and 7 years, was taught only a part of a trade. He learned that part in less time than required by the customary indentures, and ran away before his term of service expired. The master's loss was small, for boys could easily be gotten, and the simple process could be taught them in a brief space of time. The papers of this period are full of advertisements for runaway apprentices headed often by the words "One Cent Reward," which indicates the small value that masters placed on apprentices, and which at the same time, freed them from any legal obligation for acts that the apprentice might commit. One master varied the monotony by offering "one cent and a basket of shavings reward," [13] and a wheelwright offered a pint of tar for the return of his apprentice.[14]

The workingmen early felt the danger of the breakdown of apprenticeship. "There are men in this city," said the *Mechanics' Free Press* of Philadelphia in 1828, "who never or very seldom have a journeyman in their shops, but to supply the place of journeymen, and to monopolise to themselves trade and wealth, as one apprentice becomes free, another is taken to fill up the ranks." [15] Not only did this practice throw journeymen out of employment, but the employers who manufactured with apprentice labour were enabled to sell their goods so cheaply as to drive other employers out of the market. The printers complained bitterly of this system. In 1830 it was said that many journeymen printers were out of work in Philadelphia because of the employment of boys,[16] and this was one of the chief causes of complaint which led to the formation of the National Typographical Association in 1836.[17] Again in 1839, a correspondent of the Philadelphia *Public Ledger,* complained against master mechanics for employing apprentices instead of journeymen and stated that, because some of them employed from 14 to 17 boys and not a single journeyman, the city was filled with journeymen out of work.[18]

A graphic description of what apprenticeship came to be at this time, was given in 1829 in a series of articles which appeared in the *Mechanics' Free Press.* Formerly "in the in-

13 *Mechanics' Free Press,* Dec. 11, 1830.
14 *Delaware Free Press,* Apr. 24, 1830.
15 Nov. 29, 1828. See *Doc. Hist.,* V, 70–72.
16 *Mechanics' Free Press,* Feb. 20, 1830.
17 See below, I, 443 *et seq.*
18 Philadelphia *Public Ledger,* Jan. 29, 1839.

fancy of art," said the writer, "seven years was accounted sufficient to acquire a trade." But now, boys give 5, 6, or 7 years to learn a trade, "although labour is so divided that what made one trade formerly, now makes half a dozen, and every working tool is simplified or improved — to say nothing of machinery."[19] Many trades, he said, could be learned in a few weeks, and yet boys were compelled to give the most valuable years of their lives for the privilege of a few weeks' tuition. He further asserted that masters did not teach their apprentices all they themselves knew, but only enough to make them useful during their apprenticeship. "Does a boy in a tailor's shop," he asked, "generally learn the art of cutting out? The same may be asked of boot and shoe makers. Does the carpenter's apprentice . . . learn stiffling, finishing, shaving? Does the printer learn case, and press and proof reading?"[20] The whole system of apprenticeship, he concluded, was simply a pretext for using cheap labour.

To protect themselves some of the societies undertook to regulate apprenticeship within their trades. The Journeymen Rope Makers of Brooklyn declared that they would not work with any journeyman who had not completed his entire term; that each journeyman should be able to produce a certificate from his master that he had completed his term, and that they would not work in the same shop with a man who had not served an apprenticeship.[21] The Journeymen Coach Makers of Troy went further and attempted to fix a ratio of apprentices to skilled men in each shop. They resolved that in order to guard themselves against "the influence which an employer may exercise by employing an undue proportion of men under instruction and apprentices to that of regular journeymen," they would not, after a certain date, instruct apprentices "over a proportion of one to every four regular journeymen in any branches attached to the coach making business."[22] In this same year the cordwainers at their national convention adopted resolutions recommending to local societies such measures as would prevent any member from "taking more than two ap-

19 June 13, 1829.

20 *Ibid.*, July 18, 1829.

21 Resolutions passed by the Journeymen Rope Makers of Brooklyn in 1833, in *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, Sept. 27, 1833.

22 *National Trades' Union*, Jan. 23, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 167.

prentices at one time: one of which shall not be taken until within the last year of the time of a previous apprentice: provided that no existing contract shall be impaired." [23] Here the journeymen who worked at home proposed to place the restriction upon themselves.

This form of regulation, however, was yet new, and the trade societies had not yet formulated a definite policy of restriction. Thus in New York City the General Trades' Union requested the bakers of that city to rescind a resolution requiring that no employing baker should have more than one apprentice at the same time, which they immediately did.[24] In Philadelphia, when the master carpenters accused the journeymen of limiting the number of apprentices, the latter held a meeting and publicly denied the charges. This association denies ever passing a resolution, they said, "stating how many apprentices they should take, as we are fully satisfied, that every boy must, or ought to have a trade or calling, be it what trade or calling it may, leaving to himself the right to select." [25] The printers, too, although unrestricted apprenticeship was the bane of their trade, resented the intimation that they were attempting to restrict the number. When General Duff Green, of Washington, newspaper proprietor and Government printer, declared in 1834, that, in opposing his Washington Institute where boys were to be taught the printing trade, the Columbian Typographical Society was limiting the number of apprentices, the society replied that it did not assume "the right to regulate" the number of his apprentices "or that of any gentleman." [26]

Another source of cheap labour was the employment of women. Edith Abbott [27] gives evidence of the existence by 1837, of more than a hundred occupations in which women were engaged. In a large number of these, as "hardware," "gunpowder," "mill stones," and "stoves," the number employed may have been negligible, yet in those industries in which large numbers of them were employed they were real

23 *National Trades' Union*, Mar. 26, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 326, 327.

24 *National Trades' Union*, Aug. 9, 1834; New York *Working Man's Advocate*, June 14, 1834; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 303.

25 *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 26, 1836.

26 Ethelbert Stewart, *Documentary History of the Early Organisations of Printers*, United States Bureau of Labor, *Bulletin*, No. 61, p. 906.

27 Abbott, *Women in Industry*, 66–70.

or potential competitors. In Philadelphia a report "on the committee of Female Labour," [28] said: "Of fifty-eight societies, twenty-four are seriously affected by female labour, to the impoverishing of whole families, and benefit of none but the employers."

In cigar making more women appear to have been employed than men. In 1832, 11 tobacco and cigar factories in Massachusetts employed 238 women, 50 men, and 9 children.[29] This probably followed from the fact that women started the industry in this country as a household occupation. The thrifty wives of farmers during spare time worked up into cigars the crops their husbands raised.[30] But as the industry developed and the home product came more and more into competition with the finely finished products from abroad, it passed into the factories. Here the men came in and gradually displaced the women, so that in 1860 there were only 731 employed in the country or 9.1 per cent of all those employed.[31] In the thirties there were already enough men in the trade to take the lead in an effort to raise wages. In Philadelphia, in 1835, they attempted to raise the price of their work "so as to earn a sufficiency on the principle of ten hours labour," and at the same time invited the women to strike with them, "thereby making it a mutual interest with both parties to sustain each other in their rights." The wages "received by the females engaged in segar making," they pointed out, "is far below a fair compensation for the labour rendered." [32]

The printers, who have been most dogged in resisting the introduction of women into their trade, even in the thirties had cause to be alarmed. In 1832, a member of the Philadelphia Typographical Society was said to be about to employ women as compositors and to place them in charge of a non-union foreman. The feeling in the society ran so high that the accused found it necessary to write a letter to be spread on the minutes

28 Report to the *National Trades' Union*, Convention of 1836, held in Philadelphia, October 24–28; *National Laborer*, Nov. 12, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 286.

29 *Documents Relative to the Manufactures in the United States, House Documents*, 22 Cong., 1st Sess., No. 308 (1833), I, 221, 241, 251, 257, 323, 461.

30 Abbott, *Women in Industry*, 190.

31 *Senate Document*, No. 645, Report on Conditions of Women and Child Wage-Earners in the United States in nineteen volumes, Vol. IX; H. L. Sumner, *History of Women in Industry in the United States, Senate Document*, 61 Cong., 2 sess., No. 645, IX, 187, 256.

32 *Proceedings of the Government and Citizens of Philadelphia on the Reduction of the Hours of Labor and Increase of Wages* (Boston, 1835, Pamphlet).

denying that he had ever intended to do such a thing. Three years later a special meeting was called by the Columbia Typographical Society, Washington, because of a statement that appeared in a local paper stating "that girls were being employed as compositors in newspaper offices in Philadelphia" to break a strike. Resolutions were adopted and embodied in a circular letter and sent to the typographical societies in Philadelphia, Boston, New York, and Baltimore, asking if any girls were so employed, if so, how many, and what action these societies "proposed to take to prevent the further progress of this evil?"[33]

The great majority of women workers, however, were employed as seamstresses and tailoresses. They sewed on shirts, children's clothes, pantaloons, and cheap, ready-made clothing for the western and southern trade. In working on ready-made clothing for the western farmers and southern slaves, the women did not compete with the journeymen tailors who were still working for the custom trade. But their employment there was an entering wedge to the latter. In 1833, during the tailors' strike in New York City, the New York *Journal of Commerce* stated that it would be an easy matter to defeat the journeymen tailors, as "women may well do half which the men have been accustomed to do."[34] Three years later the master tailors accused the journeymen of not wanting to work for those who employed women.[35] Similar accusations were made against the tailors of Cincinnati, Louisville, and St. Louis.[36]

In his effort to reduce operating costs, the merchant-capitalist frequently resorted to convict labour. Indeed, it was due largely to his aid that it became possible to carry out successfully the humane plan of setting the prisoners to productive work. Yet humane as this change appeared to the prison reformers of the time, it could not help but exercise a deteriorating influence on the bargaining power of free labourers.

Close to the end of the eighteenth century, Pennsylvania and New York abolished the death penalty for a large number of

[33] Stewart, *A Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 884.
[34] Oct. 12, 1833.
[35] New York *American*, June 15, 1836.
[36] *Commercial Bulletin and Missouri Literary Register* (St. Louis), Dec. 18, 1835.

crimes as well as many of the forms of punishment which came down from the Middle Ages, like branding, pillorying, etc. As confinement in a penitentiary was substituted, it was provided that the prisoners should be employed at hard labour. Massachusetts followed in 1805, Vermont in 1809, Maryland in 1811, and New Hampshire in 1812.

While the laws regarding these prisons provided that the convicts be kept at hard labour, none of them was productive. The discipline was poor. The convicts were crowded together in small rooms. During the daytime, and while the prisoners were at work, there was as little supervision as at night. As a rule no shops were built, the prisoners being placed in small groups, probably not more than six, at whatever trade they brought with them, in rooms that might have been used for lodging purposes. Discipline was impossible under such circumstances; they worked, says an anonymous pamphlet on the *Prisons of Philadelphia,* "under mutual inspection of each other." [37]

This was before the merchant-capitalist had made his appearance. There were no customers for the larger output of which the prisons were capable. No master mechanic, working with one or two journeymen, could use the prisons. The result was that the latter had to seek their own market which in fact did not yet exist. The Philadelphia prison operated at an average annual loss of about $30,000,[38] and in New York the state prison during the first twenty-five years of its existence, from 1797 to 1821, inclusive, operated at an average annual loss of $16,919.52.[39]

With a widened market, however, and the rise of the merchant-capitalist in the late twenties and early thirties, a reorganisation in the prisons took place and the modern prison system was launched. Instead of keeping the prisoners crowded together during the night, they were placed in separate cells now provided for them; instead of working them in small shops under "mutual inspection," large shops were erected in the prison court yards where supervision and discipline were easy. "A single overseer," says the Boston Prison Discipline So-

37 *On the Prisons of Philadelphia, by An European* (Philadelphia, 1796), 17.

38 Board of Managers of the Prison Discipline Society of Boston, *Second Annual Report*, 1827, I, 121.

39 *Ibid.*, 147.

ciety, describing the new shops at the Massachusetts prison, "really does more to prevent evil communication between one hundred men in this shop, than ten overseers could do to prevent it among the same number in the apartments of the old brick building."[40] Instead of manufacturing on their own account, the prisoners were now let out to contractors.

The prison which took the lead in this reorganisation was the New York State prison at Auburn. It was begun in 1816 and designed upon the old plan, but in 1819, "alarmed at the progress of crime, and the condition of the old penitentiaries," says the report of the Commissioners on the Penal Code of Pennsylvania speaking of prison reform in New York, the legislature authorised an alteration in the plan in consequence of which solitary confinement at night and "joint" labour during the day were adopted.[41] "There must be at least one assistant keeper in each mechanic department," said the keeper of the prison,[42] "who instructs new convicts, and sees that the old make first-rate work." At the commencement of the life of this prison, too, "the agent purchased all raw materials, had them manufactured and sold from a prison store, on account of the state." But the legislature soon abolished that system and "directed that no materials beyond a very limited amount should be purchased on account of the state; but that the agent should make contracts for the labour, simply, of convicts, with those who would furnish materials, and dispose of the articles manufactured exclusively on their own account." In this way, said the keeper, "great risk and losses are avoided, and much private capital, and personal interest and enterprise, are brought into action, in promoting the active and profitable employment of the convicts."[43]

The prison met with success almost from the start. Other States took up the plan and the deficits of the old prisons were soon turned into profits in the new. The New York State prisons at New York[44] and Auburn[45] for the first time be-

40 *Ibid.*, 105.

41 Pennsylvania, *Laws*, 1828–1829, No. 204, p. 341; see also *Senate Journal*, 1827–1828, p. 367, *Report of the Commissioners on the Penal Code of Pennsylvania.*

42 *Report of Gershom Powers, Agent and Keeper of the State Prison at Auburn, to the Legislature*, Jan. 7, 1828, 25.

43 *Report of Gershom Powers*, 41.

44 Board of Managers of the Prison Discipline Society, *Tenth Annual Report*, 1835, I, 934.

45 *Ibid., Ninth Annual Report*, 1834, I, 808.

came profitable in 1828. Connecticut prisons,[46] too, for the first time became profitable in this year. In 1832 those of Massachusetts became permanently profitable,[47] and in 1835 we learn that Sing Sing, in New York, had a net profit of $28,-819.36.[48] The prisons in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont were first reorganised during the thirties and wavered between profit and loss.[49]

According to an estimate made by the Boston Prison Discipline Society, the "probable number of persons in prison in the United States, at any one time, in 1833," was 12,260.[50] Based on the nearest census of population (12,866,020 in 1830) this would give 95.2 prisoners to each 100,000 of population.[51] The competition against the free mechanics from this direction would seem insignificant enough, nevertheless the latter felt that the prison system imposed "an unjust and pernicious tax" on them. "It is true," said an address adopted at a convention of mechanics held at Utica, August 20, 1834,[52] "that mechanics are not called upon to pay money to defray the expenses of the prisoners; but articles manufactured in the prisons are sold in almost every city, town and village, in the State, at prices from 40 to 60 per cent below what the honest mechanic, who supports himself and family, can afford them for; and the consequence is, that hundreds of mechanics are thrown out of employment, and, in many cases, their families are reduced to beggary."

But important as the competitive menaces of child, woman, and prison labour were in accounting for the initial rise of trade unionism, its luxuriant growth during the middle thirties was primarily due to the remarkable rise in prices. Andrew Jackson, who had always looked upon the United States Bank as a huge monopoly and as his political enemy, succeeded in crushing it in 1833. On July 10, 1832 he vetoed a bill to recharter it and the people indorsed him in the campaign of the

46 *Ibid., Eighth Annual Report*, 1833, I, 675.

47 *Ibid., Tenth Annual Report*, 1834, I, 905.

48 *Ibid., Eleventh Annual Report*, 1836, II, 36.

49 *Ibid., Eighth Annual Report*, 1833, I, 627; and *Eleventh Annual Report*, 1836, II, 29–32.

50 *Ibid., Ninth Annual Report*, 1834, I, 790. This figure does not include 380 juvenile delinquents in houses of refuge which the society includes in its estimate.

51 On January 1, 1910, the total number of prisoners in penal institutions was 111,498, with 121.2 per 100,000 of the population. United States, *Statistical Abstract*, 1915, p. 55.

52 *The Man*, Sept. 11, 1834.

same year. Although its charter did not expire until 1836 he ordered his secretary of the treasury to make no further government deposits in the bank after October, 1833, and to withdraw the deposits already there.

In August when the president's intentions were made clear the bank had already begun to curtail discounts. Hard times followed. Wheat, which sold for $1 fell to 62½ cents. The notes of good local banks passed current at a discount of from ½ to 5 per cent., others at as high as 12 per cent. Capital commanded 3 per cent a month; manufacturers and canal companies were forced to issue due bills.[53]

The depression, however, soon gave way to prosperity. The public deposits that were removed from the United States Bank were re-deposited in eighty-eight state banks scattered over the country, thus making the funds even more available than before. Moreover, the United States Bank had served as a check upon local banks and, when that check was removed, banking became easier and banks increased in number and enlarged their business. From 1834 to 1837, 194 new banks were organised in the United States, and during this time the banks in the New England States increased their issues by $6,000,000, about 50 per cent on former issues, the banks in the Middle Atlantic States increased theirs by about $14,000,000 with a like percentage, the banks in the Southern States by $34,000,000 which was an increase of about 130 per cent, and the banks in the Western States $6,800,000 which was an increase of about 100 per cent.[54]

This increase in the supply of money presently told on the business conditions of the country. By the spring of 1835 loans could easily be made and a period of speculation followed which lasted two years. Prices in some instances more than doubled. Flour in New York which was $5 a barrel in 1834, rose to $7 in July, 1835, $8 in April, 1836, and $12 in March, 1837; mess pork, which was $13 to $14 in 1834, rose to $30 in October, 1836; rice in the same period advanced from $2.25 to $4; molasses from 28 cents to 48 cents; sheeting from $8.50 to $12; wool from 30 cents to 50 cents; and so on for other commodi-

53 James S. Schouler, *History of the United States of America*, IV, 158–160.

54 John Jay Knox, *History of Banking in the United States*, 82.

ties.[55] The general price index rose from 90.1 in 1834 to 115.7 in 1836.[56] City lots went up almost in the same ratio as food stuffs. The assesed value of real estate in New York City was $114,124,566 in 1833 and $253,201,191 in 1836.[57] "Rents," declared the New York *Transcript,* "were enormously high . . . owners demand for the ensuing year an advance of twenty-five and thirty, and even as high as forty per cent on the rent of the current year." [58]

In addition to increasing the cost of living paper money added another hardship which particularly affected the workingmen. The coinage ratio of 15 to 1 prior to 1834 drove gold out of circulation, and the ratio of 16 to 1 adopted in that year, drove out silver.[59] The only medium that remained was paper. This the workingmen, in receiving their wages, often had to accept at face value, but could pass it on only at a discount. Moreover the workingmen dealt mainly in small denominations and these were of the most questionable character. They circulated so far from their point of issue that it was impossible for the average person to know their real value. In 1835 it was estimated that there were in circulation in the United States $120,000,000 in "rag money," $13,000,000 of which was in "rags under the denomination of five dollars." [60] This evil led to a movement in New York to prohibit the issuing of notes under $5. In 1836 it was urged by William Leggett, the editor of the *Plaindealer,* that mechanics and labourers ought to organise "against the practice which we have reason to believe exists to a very great extent of paying them in the uncurrent notes of distant or suspected banks." [61] The next year it was said in New York that "there are at this moment, and have been for two years past, at least two hundred dollars of uncurrent notes floating in this city, to one dollar of our city banks. The city banks cannot issue their notes beyond a very limited amount, first, because there is little room for them, and secondly, because they are liable to be instantly

55 Secretary of Treasury, *Report on State of the Finances,* 1863, pp. 302–308.

56 See chart, above, I, 11.

57 *Niles' Weekly Register,* Nov. 12, 1836; quoted from the New York *Daily Advertiser.*

58 Copied in the *National Trades' Union,* Apr. 4, 1835.

59 D. R. Dewey, *Financial History of the United States,* 190–227.

60 *The Man,* Jan. 5, 1835.

61 New York *Plaindealer,* Dec. 10, 1836.

returned upon them for specie, to supply the demands of retail exchange, which these uncurrent notes cannot meet." [62]

It was the advance in the cost of living and other hardships that paper money imposed on the workingmen that stimulated them to action. It is certain that the growth of trade unionism at this time would not have been as luxuriant as it was, had it not been for inflated prices and fiat money. Indeed, nothing similar occurred until thirty years later, and then, too, through excessive issues of paper money. The wholesale system of production, the division of labour, apprenticeship, woman labour, prison labour, would perhaps have yielded a labour movement, but it would not have been as phenomenal as it was.

THE SPREAD OF LOCAL TRADE SOCIETIES, 1833–1837

Even before the era of wildcat banks and soaring prices, the industrial centres began to be dotted with numerous local trade unions. In New York in 1833, when the carpenters struck, fifteen trades met in separate meetings and pledged their financial support.[63] In Baltimore several trades made common cause against the employing hatters who were trying to force a reduction of wages on their journeymen [64] and a month later the same trades and others, seventeen in number, met to consider a ten-hour day.[65] Those trades in Baltimore that had not been organised were fired with zeal. The coach makers adopted a new constitution and by-laws.[66] The cordwainers working on ladies' shoes resolved to form themselves "into a trade society, for the purpose of promoting Union and Harmony" among themselves and "regularity" in wages.[67] The chair makers and ornamental painters joined in a society "for social benevolent purposes, and to regulate wages fairly and impartially." [68] Even the tailoresses and seamstresses organised the Female Union Society of Tailoresses and Seamstresses to force the employers to adopt a new bill of prices.[69] In Philadelphia the cotton factory operatives took the lead, and as we shall see later, brought the operatives in the

62 New York *New Era*, Mar. 15, 1837.
63 *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, May 21, 1833.
64 Baltimore *Republican and Commercial Advertiser*, July 29, 1833.
65 *Ibid.*, Aug. 2 and 16, 1833.
66 *Ibid.*, Aug. 21, 1833.
67 *Ibid.*, Aug. 21, 1833.
68 *Ibid.*, Sept. 5, 1833.
69 *Ibid.*, Oct. 8, 1833.

neighbouring towns together into the Trades' Union of Pennsylvania.[70]

These activities were presently checked, however, by the cramp in the money market that intervened between the withdrawal of government deposits from the United States Bank and the deposit of them in the state banks. The readjustment spread depression over the country which lasted almost a year and a half. During this time only here and there a trade stirred against a reduction in wages;[71] the movement was practically suspended. But with the return of prosperity in 1835, the trades again resumed action; and during the height of the wildcat prosperity in 1835 and 1836, proceeded with unusual vigour.

In Philadelphia, the cordwainers working on men's shoes took the lead on March 30, 1835. They held a meeting and prepared a circular to be distributed throughout the city of Philadelphia. The circular contained a list of evils existing in the trade, and pointed out that "trade societies are the best means" by which to remedy them, and that "Trades' unions are the next means." The latter, it said, "will prove the bulwarks of our rights and privileges — there, the strength of all societies are brought to bear against any object of oppression — and what power can resist such a tower of strength: with such means as those at hand, we can easily remedy all the evils of which we complain."[72] Soon the handloom weavers followed and resolved to organise the Hand Loom Weavers' Association of the city and county of Philadelphia.[73] Societies that appeared for the first time were those of the plasterers, bricklayers, black and white smiths, segar makers, plumbers, and the Female Improvement Society, including tailoresses, seamstresses, binders, folders, milliners, stock makers, corset makers and mantua makers. The outcome was an increase from the 21 societies which we have found in 1833 and 1834, to 53 societies in 1836.[74]

70 See below, I, 373–375.

71 See below, I, 397–401.

72 *Pennsylvanian*, Apr. 4, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 21.

73 *Pennsylvanian*, May 15, 1835.

74 *National Laborer*, Nov. 12, 1836. See Appendix I, below, containing complete list of organisations found in Philadelphia during this period. This will also give an idea of the extent of organization by trades.

Outside Philadelphia organisation became equally brisk. In Newark during this period 16 societies appeared,[75] in Boston, also 16,[76] in Baltimore, 23[77] and in New York, 52.[78]

In New York City, as in Philadelphia, the cordwainers set the example to others. An appeal was made to all cordwainers to join the society "to protect themselves and their children against the destructive effects of monopoly." The activities of the Philadelphia society were held up as a "glorious" example, the watchword, *"United we stand, divided we fall,"* was made much of, and as an inducement to membership it was announced that the books of the society would be thrown open for two months so that "all who will, may join *gratis*."[79] Twenty-nine societies were counted in New York in 1833, and these increased to fifty-two in 1836.

From the Atlantic coast the movement spread westward, extending as far as St. Louis and including the budding industrial towns of Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and Louisville. The movement here was composed chiefly of eastern mechanics who had come to the West with a prospect of securing higher wages. But when they arrived they found that prices were in some instances more than correspondingly high. In Buffalo the journeymen builders' association in 1836 included all the building trades. In Pittsburgh there were 13 societies embracing a variety of trades,[80] in Cincinnati 14,[81] and in Louisville 7.[82] Those organised in Louisville were the tailors, cordwainers, printers, coach makers, saddlers, cabinetmakers, and tin plate workers.

In December, 1835, the tailors were organised in Louisville, Cincinnati, and St. Louis, and even appear to have made a concerted effort against their employers in these three cities. In Cincinnati the masters in an address "To the Public,"[83] which was later reprinted in St. Louis, complained of the fact that the journeymen tailors had formed themselves into a society "for the purpose of controlling the prices to be paid them for

75 *National Trades' Union*, Feb. 13, 1836.
76 *Appendix* I, below.
77 *Ibid.*
78 *Ibid.*
79 *The Man*, June 22, 1835.
80 *Public Ledger*, Mar. 7, 1837.
81 *National Laborer*, June 11, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 127.
82 *National Laborer*, June 4, 1836.
83 *Commercial Bulletin and Missouri Literary Register* (St. Louis, Mo.), Dec. 18, 1835.

the work, and have for many years regulated their own wages." Not content with that, the address continued, "they have refused to work for those who employ apprentices, or who give any work to females, except such as they dictate. . . ." They insist on occupying the back shops on Sunday for drinking, and playing cards, and when their demands are not granted they quit work and propose to open 'Union Shops,' that is co-operative shops, offering to work for less than they get as journeymen. All this they do in spite of the fact that they receive $8 for making a coat and other work in proportion. A journeyman can make two coats a week and can earn from $65 to $75 a month. "If these societies," continues the address, "were under the direction of the steady and industrious workmen, we should have no cause to complain . . ." They are, however, entirely controlled by a "set of roving, dissipated, unsettled men, having no fixed residence, and no character to lose; whose conduct has become so intolerably oppressive as to make it necessary for us to appeal to the Public."

In St. Louis the "United Benevolent Society of Journeymen Tailors" opened a co-operative shop in December, 1835, when their employers refused to subscribe to their list of prices. This action caused a split in the ranks of the society. Some of the members broke away and organised the "Reformed Society of Journeymen Tailors of the city of St. Louis," and returned to work. A feud followed. Each charged the other that its members were working below price, and the old society publicly stated that the new one was a tool in the hands "and under the control and command of three or four *crooks*" who considered themselves "the only *responsible* employers in the city." The old society continued its co-operative shop until spring when the employers accepted the price lists.[84]

THE ORGANISATION OF WORKING WOMEN

The agitation and organisation among workingmen stimulated the workingwomen to organise. Those employed as seamstresses, tailoresses, and shoe binders were the most active in organisation, although considerable agitation was carried on

[84] *Ibid.*, Dec. 9 and 21, 1835, Jan. 18, Feb. 5, 12, and 17, Mar. 16, May 18, May 30, and June 10, 1836.

among those who worked as umbrella makers, cigar makers, and bookbinders. In New York City the female bookbinders were organised as the Female Union Association,[85] and during a strike for higher wages the New York *Journal of Commerce* ridiculed them in an item on "Broom Stick Strikes."[86]

In the needle trades the sweat-shop system was just making its appearance. Except for the fact that women worked in their own homes instead of in the shop of a contractor, it had all the earmarks of the present system. The work was irregular and was miserably paid. While cotton factory operatives in 1836 earned on an average from $2.19 to $2.53 a week,[87] seamstresses averaged only $1.25 a week. In 1830 the New York *Daily Sentinel*[88] stated that there were many women in New York who were employed "in making duck pantaloons for a ready-made clothes store for four cents a pair, and cotton shirts for seven cents a piece." These women, it was stated, with the most unremitting industry "could sew no more than three pair of pantaloons or one shirt in a day." The women were obliged to take this work or remain without employment, because the "storekeeper, for whom they wrought, could procure the service of emigrants wretchedly poor, or get his work done in almshouses, and would give no higher wages. In consequence the price of such work was reduced to nearly a similar rate throughout the city." In 1833 Mathew Carey estimated that, taking as a basis the highest wages paid outside of charitable institutions and passing over possible unemployment, sickness, and lack of employment, a woman without children could earn $58.50 per annum, but women with children and working at the average rate could earn no more than $36.40 per annum.[89]

In September, 1833, a number of women "engaged in ob-

[85] New York *Evening Post*, July 10, 1835.

[86] *Ibid.*, June 23, 1835.

[87] Wright, *Report on the Factory System in the United States*, in U. S. Census, 1880, II, 44.

[88] Reprinted in *Mechanics' Free Press*, Oct. 23, 1830.

[89] Carey, *Appeal to the Wealthy of the Land*, 15. Mathew Carey, the father of Henry C. Carey, the economist, was born in Ireland, January 28, 1760. He started life as a printer, but became a power in politics at an early age. In 1784 he was obliged to emigrate to America in consequence of his attack upon the British ministry. Landing in Philadelphia, he engaged first in the newspaper and then in the publishing business. In the latter business he flourished, and was thus enabled to devote himself to philanthropy. He was especially interested in the lot of the working women. He died in 1839.

taining a livelihood by the use of the needle" at Fells Point, near Baltimore, organised into a society.[90] This organisation did not last long; another appeared early in 1835, under the name of the United Seamstresses Society of Baltimore,[91] and in September of that year still another, the United Men and Women's Trading Society, to which men and women belonged.[92]

In Philadelphia the seamstresses were organised in 1835, and in New York in 1836.[93] The organisation in Philadelphia, already referred to, was singular, for it included not only seamstresses and tailoresses, but also binders, milliners, folders, mantua makers, and stock makers.[94] It may be said to be the first federation of women workers in this country. It was organised on June 20, and was called "The Female Improvement Society of the City and County of Philadelphia."[95] Committees representing each branch of work were appointed to draw up lists of prices for the respective trades to be submitted to the employers. The employers appear to have granted the increase without a strike, and the association soon after went to pieces.

Next to seamstresses the women working as shoe binders were most widely organised. Like the seamstresses they worked in their own homes stitching and binding the uppers that were cut in the shops, and, next to the seamstresses, they were the poorest paid for their work. In the state of Massachusetts, where some 15,366 women were engaged in the shoe industry, 265 women at Haverhill earned 20 cents a day; at Malden, 200 earned 25 cents; at Randolph, 300 women earned 40 cents; at Marblehead, 130 earned 8 or 9 cents a day; and at Lynn, 1,600 women earned from 12 to 50 cents a day.[96]

At Lynn, when the employers, in the fall of 1833, attempted to reduce wages still lower, the women organised the "Female Society of Lynn and Vicinity for the protection and promotion of Female Industry," to counteract them. They adopted a

90 Baltimore *Republican and Commercial Advertiser*, Sept. 14, 30, and Oct. 3, 1833.

91 *Ibid.*, Jan. 1, and Apr. 24, 1835.

92 *Ibid.*, Sept. 14, 1835.

93 New York *Evening Post*, Dec. 26, 1836.

94 Strikes and Lockouts prior to 1881, in U. S. Labor Bureau, *Sixteenth Report*, 727, 728; quoted from "Labor Troubles in Pennsylvania," in Pennsylvania Bureau of Industrial Statistics, *Report*, 1880–1881, p. 265.

95 *Radical Reformer and Working Men's Advocate*, July 18, 1835.

96 *Documents Relative to the Manufactures of the United States, House Documents*, 22 Cong., 1 sess., I and II, cited by Abbott, *Women in Industry*, 156–158.

constitution which declared besides other things that the society would regulate "the prices of the different kinds of shoe binding," [97] and went on strike to do so. The reduction was successfully resisted.[98] Some time later we learn that the society had 1,000 members. It sent two men delegates to the first meeting of the Trades' Union of Boston, held on March 6, 1834. Three months later, however, in an address to members issued on June 18, we read a warning of disintegration. "The present state of this Society," said the address, "calls for our serious and candid attention; it seems that but little regard is paid to the rules and regulations; that they have been broken and disregarded by many of its members, who have taken work under price." [99] The society gradually dissolved.

In New York the Ladies' Shoe Binders Society was organised on May 28, 1835, at a meeting called for the purpose of forming a scale of prices,[1] and a year later the Females' Association of Boot and Shoe Binders and Corders of the city and county of Philadelphia was organised in order to prevent the recurrence of the hardships of the preceding winter.[2] The latter society had a membership of about 400, and soon after its organisation entered upon a strike, lasting over a month, for higher wages. The cordwainers working on ladies' shoes, who were also on a strike at this time, aided the women financially and aroused considerable sympathy in their behalf. They asked Mathew Carey, who had been writing and speaking on behalf of women workers for a number of years, to make a statement at this time. He gladly responded by pointing out that the earnings of no small portion of the women were much too inadequate to procure necessary food and clothing, and expressed his belief with Justice Wyman, one of the police magistrates of New York, "that no inconsiderable portion of female distress, and female depravity, is to be attributed to the very scanty remuneration" [3] received for their labour.[4]

97 Lynn *Record*, Jan. 8, 1834.
98 *Ibid.*, Mar. 12, 1834.
99 *Ibid.*, June 18, 1834.
1 *The Man*, May 27, 1835.
2 *National Laborer*, Apr. 2 and 30, 1836.
3 *Ibid.*, Apr. 30, 1836.
4 See Andrews and Bliss, *History of Women in Trade Unions*, 36–45.

CHAPTER II

THE CITY TRADES' UNION

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GROWTH AND FUNCTIONS

The next form of organisation during the thirties was the city central union. That trade societies alone were not sufficient was generally understood by working people. They were made up of workingmen in the same craft and were thus too small to cope with employers single-handed. The remedy was to bring them together in a general union of trades or "trades' union," as it was called, the apostrophe after the word "trades" indicating a union of separate trades. "The Trades' Union," writes one "Sherman" in 1836, explaining its structure, "is a system of our *National Government in miniature*. It is composed of delegates elected by the Societies represented in proportion to their number of members, the same as the Congress is composed of delegates from the people." [1]

1 *Pennsylvanian*, Apr. 1, 1836. At the present time the trades' union would be known as the "city central," or "federated trades council." It should be noted that the word "society" or "association" was used to designate what would now be known as a "trade union," namely, a union within a single trade.

While the trades' unions grew out of a need for greater protection, they were equally a product of the growth of cities which at this time increased both in size and number.[2] Here were found large numbers of workingmen congregated and, when the occasion arose, as it did in the thirties, they combined to act together.

New York City had become, after 1820, the metropolis of the country and also the industrial and commercial center. Here the first trades' union was organised, August 14, 1833.[3]

The event was given wide publicity. John Finch, a printer, who took an active part in organising the Union, soon after published a pamphlet on the *Rise and Progress of the General Trades' Union of the City of New York and its Vicinity.* This, together with an *Address to the Mechanics of the City of New York, and throughout the United States,* was distributed in the important cities in the country. Finch spoke of the successes of strikes conducted with the support of the union, the evils of the factory system and child labour. He complained of the fact that "while the Employer was rapidly running the road to wealth, the Employed was too often the victim of oppression, bound to the vassalage of inadequate rewards for his labour, and crushed and conquered in spirit by the utter impossibility of advancing his comforts or his fortunes in life." "It is a well known fact," he said, "that the blacks of the south enjoy more leisure, time, and liberty, and fare quite as well as the operatives in the northern and eastern manufactories." [4]

Before the year was over three other cities had similar organisations. In Baltimore, as it appears, even before the details of the New York organisation were known, the workingmen organised a central body. The occasion was the attempt on the part of the master hatters to reduce the wages of their journeymen. The latter issued an appeal "to their fellow citizens" and, on July 24, mechanics "of all denominations" met and passed resolutions urging them to "stick, in true faith to the noble resolutions they have adopted," that is, not to yield

2 See above, I. 176. 177.

3 *National Trades' Union*, Aug. 9, 1834.

4 Finch, *Rise and Progress of the General Trades' Union of the City of New York and its Vicinity.* With an *Address to the Mechanics in the City of New York, and throughout the United States.*

to the reduction of wages.[5] The reduction, as it appears, was successfully resisted.

Encouraged by this triumph, the trades again met in the following month to take into "consideration the ten-hour system." [6] The outcome of this demand is not certain, but it furnished a point for further common action. In September the trades took the final step and unanimously resolved to form themselves into a "Union Trade Society." [7] An address "to the Operative Mechanics" announcing the formation of the union urged that all mechanics form distinct and separate societies and that each man attach himself "to the Society composed of the members of his own particular calling." These should send delegates to the Union, which would be the "organ of communication between them," and would have the final word "on all questions and objects which require, for their successful accomplishment, the united action of Mechanics." [8]

Two months later, in Philadelphia, delegates representing the bookbinders, cordwainers, and tailors met and resolved to establish a "General Trades' Union, on a basis similar to that already in existence in New York and Baltimore." In Washington, too, a union was formed about this time. Just when it was organised is not certain; it may have been organised even before the one in Philadelphia. Some time in the summer of 1833, the carpenters resolved that they would no longer work 15 to 17 hours a day for $1.37½. They won out, and, being determined "to follow up the good work to consummation," as one stated it in a Fourth of July speech delivered in 1834, they "addressed a letter to the different Trades, requesting them to appoint committees to consult on the propriety of establishing a Trades' Union." Several trades responded, and now they saw themselves "awarded by a tie of fraternal feeling with more than half the trades of the district." [9]

The year 1834 was a year of depression. In Boston, the only large city where no central labour organisation had yet been formed, one was organised in March of this year. But in 1835 and 1836, when speculation was at its height and when

5 Baltimore *Republican and Commercial Advertiser*, July 27, 1833.
6 *Ibid.*, Aug. 2, 1833.
7 *Ibid.*, Sept. 6, 1833.
8 *Ibid.*, Sept. 9, 1833.
9 *National Trades' Union*, Aug. 30, 1834.

prices were approaching the maximum of this period, eight other such organisations were formed. In 1835 trades' unions were organised in New Brunswick [10] and Newark, New Jersey,[11] in Albany, Troy, and Schenectady, New York,[12] and, in 1836, in Pittsburgh,[13] Cincinnati,[14] and Louisville,[15] which then represented the Far West. The workingmen of Troy and Schenectady at first joined with those of Albany in one organisation, but later broke away and formed unions of their own.[16] By 1836, there were at least thirteen trades' unions in the country.

One of the first acts of the trades' unions, especially in the larger cities, was to start a newspaper or to designate one already in existence and friendly to labour as the official organ. Thus the New York Union designated as its official organ the *National Trades' Union,* a weekly published from 1834 to 1836, by its first president, Ely Moore, while the Philadelphia and Baltimore unions established papers of their own, the *Philadelphia Trades' Union* and the *Baltimore Trades' Union* respectively. The New York Union later, in 1836, also established a paper of its own and called it *The Union.* Copies of neither the Philadelphia nor the Baltimore papers have been found, but it is certain that the Philadelphia paper was displaced in 1836 by the *National Laborer,* published by the National Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and edited by Thomas Hogan, president of the Philadelphia Trades' Union in 1836. The *National Laborer* appeared for the first time in March, 1836, and expired a year later in the same month, but forms a valuable source of information for the brief period that it covered. The Boston Union adopted as its official organ the *New England Artisan,* edited by Dr. Charles Douglass, at one time president of the New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics, and other Working Men. The Washington Union at first voted to send its proceedings to the *National Trades' Union* for publication, but later decided that they should be published in the *Washingtonian,* a local paper.

The appearance of the trades' unions was looked upon by

10 *Ibid.*, June 13, 1835.
11 *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 175–187.
12 *Ibid.*, 139–174.
13 *National Laborer*, Aug. 6, 1836; *Public Ledger*, Mar. 7, 1837.
14 *National Laborer*, June 11, 1836.
15 *Ibid.*, June 11, 1836.
16 *National Trades' Union*, Feb. 21, and July 25, 1835, and Mar. 26, 1836.

politicians as a bad omen. The episode of the Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations of Philadelphia was an example of a trade organisation becoming a political party. But this was precisely what the trades' unions themselves were guarding against. When in March, 1834, a meeting of "Journeymen Printers and other Working Men" was called through the newspapers by certain political managers, the printers held a meeting and repudiated the call. Meetings of this character, they said, "are calculated to array the members of the Different Branches in hostile opposition to each other on political subjects, and will ultimately lead to the distinction [extinction] of that palladium of their industrial rights, the Trades' Union." They urged the mechanical societies who wished "to preserve harmony and good feeling among their members, not to lend their standards to decorate the pageant of any political procession."[17]

Other unions specifically declared themselves against politics. In Baltimore "a committee appointed on the part of the societies comprising the Union, to investigate its concerns, and to report its conditions and prospects," reported that the Union was "being wilfully misrepresented" as a political body. It denied that the Union had at any time, "by principle or action, aided or abetted in any wise, any political scheme or party," and hoped that "this unequivocal fact, ratified by the Union itself, will forever put at rest that point."[18] In Philadelphia the Union went so far as to embody in its constitution a clause providing that "no Party, political or religious questions shall at any time be agitated in, or acted upon by this Union."[19]

On the eve of a political campaign in Philadelphia in 1836, the *National Laborer*[20] took it upon itself to settle the various speculations afloat as to the part the Union would play in the contest. "In the first place," it said, "we declare that the *Trades'* Union is not political (we mean by 'political' anything relating to *Party* politics), either in its nature or operations. It is a social compact, formed of Societies and Asso-

17 New York *Evening Post*, Apr. 1, 1834.

18 *National Trades' Union*, May 9, 1835.

19 *Constitution of the Trades' Union, of the City and County of Philadelphia* (1836, Leaflet), Art. XIX; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 347.

20 Aug. 20, 1836.

ciations of Mechanics and Working Men, which, having discovered that they were unable singly to combat the numerous powers arrayed against them, united together for mutual protection. . . . Secondly the *Trades' Union cannot be political.* It is composed of men of every party. A thousand different opinions would clash together, and annihilate the institution in the moment the attempt was made." And thirdly, it added, referring back to the failure of the Mechanics' Union, "the *Trades' Union never will be political,* because its members have learned from experience, that the introduction of Politics into their Societies has thwarted every effort to ameliorate their Conditions." Again, when a card appeared, in the summer of 1835, announcing a political meeting and calling upon mechanics and workingmen to attend, the same committee which had corresponded with prospective candidates warned the workingmen against political trimmers. We earnestly solicit, it said, "all mechanics and workingmen who desire to keep the questions which are now agitating the public mind, free from the taint of politics, or from the contaminating influence of political leaders, not to go to said meeting." [21]

The only city in which a political movement accompanied the trade union movement was Baltimore. Here a "Union Trade Society" was organised on September 4, 1833, and five days later a notice of a "town meeting" appeared, the purpose of which was to appoint delegates to a convention "to form a mechanical ticket, for the ensuing election." [22]

Another charge made against the unions was that of agrarianism. This was based on the activities of Thomas Skidmore in the political movement of the late twenties. But when a communication appeared in a New York paper charging the Union with agrarianism, its corresponding secretary denied that it had anything to do with "these mad brained schemes." [23] In Philadelphia similar charges were made. But here the editor of the *National Laborer,* while denying that the Union was agrarian, defended what agrarianism proposed, and hailed it as a doctrine "which Christianity acknowledges and insists upon." Though we are not agrarians, he said, "we believe

21 *Pennsylvanian,* June 10, 1835.
22 Baltimore *Republican and Commercial Advertiser,* Sept. 6, 1833.
23 *The Man,* June 24, 1834.

that time is bringing in its train a better order of things, which will surely establish a state of society, where there shall be no statutory swindling of the hard earnings of the laborer — when every man may sit under his own vine, with none to make him afraid." [24]

Rejecting "panaceas," the unions adhered to their immediate demands for wages and hours. The constitution of the Trades' Union in Philadelphia provided that "any Society wishing to repel Aggression, or desirous of Striking for Hours or Wages, shall give written notice of the same, through their proper officers, to the President of the Union, who shall immediately direct the Secretary to call a special meeting, if no stated meeting should occur . . . when the vote of two-thirds of the Societies present shall be requisite to the granting of pecuniary aid to any such represented Society." This article also provided that no society should get any aid at all, if it were not represented in the Union at least six months.[25]

In New York, when strikes for higher wages became numerous in 1836, the Union took additional precaution in the form of mediation to prevent hasty strikes. A proposal was made that a "Standing Committee of Conference" be appointed whose duty it should be, whenever a disagreement occurred between journeymen and their employers, "to visit both parties and to use their endeavors to restore a good understanding and to adjust all difficulties amicably." The *National Trades' Union* supported this measure. "True," it said, "we have a regulation now, which prohibits a *Strike* on the part of any Society, before a Committee from the Union has investigated the subject and become convinced of the justice of the Journeymen's demands, but the appointment of the proposed Standing Committee, *to visit both parties,* will be an improvement. It will frequently be the means of *preventing* Strikes . . . an object earnestly to be desired." If this regulation did not in all instances prevent an "open issue," yet having ascertained the facts, the public could then judge "on whose part the fault lies." [26]

Strikes were supported by dues collected from member so-

[24] *National Laborer*, Mar. 26, 1836.

[25] *Constitution of the Trades' Union of the City and County of Philadelphia* (1836), Art. XVI; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 347.

[26] *National Trades' Union*, Mar. 12, 1836.

cieties. In both New York [27] and Philadelphia [28] the unions collected 6¼ cents a month from each society for each of its members. In case of an extraordinary conflict, the societies were asked to make special lump contributions, and during the tailors' strike in New York City in 1836, the regular dues were raised from 6¼ cents a month to 12½ cents a week "until further notice." [29] In Philadelphia, in the same year, during the strikes for higher wages, the Union in a period of six months collected $12,000.[30]

In addition to giving financial aid to strikers, the unions also attempted to boycott their employers. While individual societies during strikes had previously published lists of "foul bosses" and "fair bosses," so that the member might distinguish between them, the boycott of commodities now became possible at the hands of the union in which all or most of the mechanical branches of the city were represented. Indeed, at a meeting "of the Citizens generally" in Baltimore in 1833, even before the Union was organised, a boycott was declared against employing hatters who, as mentioned above, were trying to force a reduction of wages. Here it was declared "that the principle which actuated this movement on the part of the employing Hatters, is identically the same with that which gave birth to the celebrated Stamp and Tea Laws of '76, viz.: avarice," and resolutions were passed pledging those present "to patronise no individual in his business, be his calling what it may, who shall sanction in any shape this Anti-Republican principle." [31] In New York City, during the bakers' strike of 1834, the Union recommended "to the Public, and the Mechanics and Working Men in particular," that the most effective way of assisting the strikers was "to bestow their patronage on those employers, and only those, who give their men the full wages." [32] This resolution, with the names and addresses of thirty-three employers who gave full prices, was published in the local papers.[33]

27 *Constitution of 1833*, Art. XI; *National Trades' Union*, Aug. 9, 1834; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 215.

28 *Constitution of the Trades' Union of the City and County of Philadelphia* (1836), Art. XIV; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 342.

29 *National Trades' Union*, Mar. 26, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 296.

30 *National Laborer*, Feb. 11, 1837; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 63.

31 Baltimore *Republican and Commercial Advertiser*, July 29, 1833.

32 *The Man*, June 15, 1834; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 219.

33 *The Man*, June 15, 1834.

Thus equipped with a press, with power over locals as to strikes, with the boycott, and with a fund, the unions started out with enthusiasm. The first president of the New York Union in his inaugural speech on the importance of the Union to the workingmen said: "'Tis the only palladium that can protect you . . . 'tis the only *Sacred Mound* to which you or your posterity can flee for refuge. Beneath the banner of 'The Union' there is safety . . . security and strength; 'The Union' therefore, 'must be preserved.'" [34]

NEW YORK

The Trades' Union of New York may be said to date from the strike of the journeymen carpenters in the spring of 1833. About the middle of May the latter decided that they would hereafter "obtain from their employers a remuneration equal to the services rendered." They had been working for $1.37½ a day and asked $1.50. The employers refused to grant the increase and a strike followed. The carpenters issued an address "to the Citizens of New York" stating that they were determined to adhere to their demands until they were obtained, and, although they did not appeal for aid, 11 journeymen jewellers sent them $13. They thereupon appointed a committee to receive aid "from those who feel friendly towards us in the struggle for our right." The Typographical Society, aroused by a statement in the New York *Journal of Commerce* [35] that every good citizen should "set his face like a flint against all combinations either to elevate, or to depress the price," resolved that "as Fellow Mechanics engaged in the same cause," they would individually aid them, and called upon "Journeymen Mechanics of every Trade to raise weekly twenty-five cents from each journeyman for the assistance of the Carpenters." [36] In the next two weeks some fifteen trades met in separate meetings, passed resolutions of sympathy, and made collections for the benefit of the strikers, which amounted in case of the tailors to $136.75 [37] and in case of the masons to $150.33.[38] Even the mechanics engaged on public improve-

[34] *National Trades' Union*, Aug. 9, 1834.
[35] May 22, 1833.
[36] *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, June 3, 1833.
[37] *Ibid.*, May 31, 1833.
[38] *Ibid.*, May 24, 1833.

ments met, subscribed $22.50, and passed resolutions approving "the conduct in general of the Journeymen House Carpenters, as being the only means by which they can establish themselves as freemen and gain a compensation for their labours equivalent to the services rendered." [39]

Aided by contributions to the extent of about $1,200, the carpenters were able to hold out for about a month. At the end of that time, on June 17, they went back to work on their own terms, which were $1.50 for a day of ten hours from March 10 to November 10, and $1.37½ for a day of nine hours during the remainder of the year.[40]

A few days after the end of the strike, the printers issued a circular "to the Journeymen Mechanics and Artisans of New York," calling upon all trades to appoint delegates to meet in "a general union." "The time has now arrived," said the circular, "for the mechanics of our city to arise to their strength and determine that they will no longer submit to the thraldom which they have patiently borne for many years, nor suffer employers to appropriate an undue share of the avails of the labourer to his disadvantage. This is evident from the noble and energetic effort which they recently made to sustain their brethren, the Independent Journeymen House Carpenters, when demanding their rights. They have now become alive to the necessity of combined efforts for the purpose of self-protection; and a few enterprising men have determined to call a meeting to effect a general union of the Journeymen Mechanics and Artisans of every branch in this city."

The same circular offered a plan for organisation:

"Let each Society, Trade, or Art in the city call a meeting of its members and appoint three delegates to meet in General Convention, to hold office for one year.

"Let this convention appoint from its own body, a President, Vice-President, Recording and Corresponding Secretaries, and a Treasurer.

"For the purpose of enabling this Convention to render efficient aid, in case they should be called on by any branch of mechanics or artisans who may be there represented a capitation tax of one cent, or more per week shall be levied on every journeyman in the city, which in case of a strike shall entitle all paying

[39] *Ibid.*, May 27, 1833. [40] *Ibid.*, June 3, 1833.

it to such sum, weekly, as the Convention may determine can be afforded from the funds.

"When the members of any trade or art shall feel aggrieved and wish to advance their wages, they shall, by their delegates make a representation of their grievances to the Convention, who shall deliberate on the same, and determine whether or not it is then expedient for the members of such trade to demand an advance, and should they determine that a resort to a strike is necessary, then all of this trade who shall have contributed to the funds their regular quota shall be entitled to receive a specific sum until their difficulties are adjusted. If a combination of employers should in any manner be entered into, to reduce the present rate of wages, the Convention shall be always bound to the extent of their means, to sustain the Journeymen in their efforts to repel all such attempts." [41]

In answer to this circular some nine societies met on July 15, 1833, and unanimously resolved to "form a Convention, to be called a 'General Trades' Union.'" The societies represented at the initial meeting were the Union Society of Journeymen House Carpenters, Typographical Association of New York, Journeymen Book-Binders' Association, Leather Dressers' Association, Coopers' Society, Carvers and Gilders, bakers' societies, Cabinet Makers' Society, Journeymen Cordwainers' Society (men's branch). One member from each delegation was appointed on a committee to draft articles of organisation, and on August 14, 1833, the union was formally organised. Ely Moore, a printer, was made president. He was afterwards, in 1834, appointed by the governor of the State to serve on a special commission to investigate prison labour, and in the same year was elected as the first representative of labour in Congress.[42] "A concurrence of circumstances," he said in his speech of inauguration, "have made you the Pioneers in the great Cause." "To you, then, gentlemen, as the *actual* representatives of the Mechanic interests throughout the country, the eyes of thousands and thousands are turned; for should the experiment succeed here, and the

41 Finch, *Rise and Progress of the General Trades' Union of the City of New York and its Vicinity; Doc. Hist.*, V, 212.

42 Ely Moore was born in Sussex County, N. J., July 4, 1798. He learned the printer's trade and was editor of the New York *National Trades' Union*, 1834–1836. His prominence as a labour leader and Tammany Congressman (1835–1839) led to his appointment as surveyor of the port of New York by President Van Buren, in 1839. He held the office for six years, was subsequently Indian agent and register of the United States Land Office in Kansas, and died at Lecompton, Kans., early in 1861.

expectations of the friends of the 'Union' be realised, other Unions of a kindred character will be formed, in every section, until their influence shall be felt and acknowledged throughout our wide and extended country." But should it fail, he admonished, "the haughty aristocrats of the land would hail the event with exulting hearts and hellish satisfaction." [43]

The outline of the constitution [44] adopted was as follows: Any organised trade in the city of New York was eligible to membership. At first each society, irrespective of its membership, sent three delegates, but this was changed to proportional representation in 1835.[45] Officers were elected annually, and meetings were held monthly, with the proviso that the president and secretaries could call special meetings upon giving two days' notice.

Each society attached to the union was required to pay 6¼ cents monthly for each of its members. The fund thus created was used "to defray all necessary expenses; to maintain the present scale of prices to all members who are fairly remunerated; to raise up all such as are oppressed; to alleviate the distresses of those suffering from the want of employment; and to sustain the honour and interest of the 'Union.'" A limitation later imposed was that societies could claim strike benefits only for those members who had been in the society at least three months, and who had regularly paid their dues up to the time of the strike.[46]

Three months after the union was organised, the tailors struck for higher wages.[47] The *Journal of Commerce* attacked the Union as responsible for the strike. "The system of turn-outs," it said, "is now arranged so extensively as to bring a large number of the Trades to act together in one great combination. The plan of operation is, that the Trades shall turn out in succession . . . those that are at work supporting that which has turned out." [48] The Union, through its secretary, denied the charges. "So far from this being the case," it said, "there has never been aught said in the Convention

43 *National Trades' Union*, Aug. 9, 1834.

44 *Constitution of 1833; National Trades' Union*, Aug. 9, 1834; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 215.

45 *National Trades' Union*, Jan. 31, and Dec. 12, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 228, 277.

46 *National Trades' Union*, Aug. 9, 1834; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 217.

47 New York *Journal of Commerce*, Oct. 12, 1833.

48 *Ibid.*

relative to the grievances of any Trade whatever, with the exception of the Tailors, and no agreement has been entered into respecting any other strike." [49]

The strike was a success, and, to commemorate "these grand events," the Union held a procession and "a public jubilee." In the procession 21 societies and 4,000 persons marched, "all wearing the badges of their respective Societies." [50]

During the depression in business, in 1834, competition from prison labour came vividly to the attention of the Union. In fact, mechanics throughout the state of New York at this time made complaints.[51] But the Union was particularly active. It was instrumental in inducing the state legislature, in 1834, to create a special commission on prison labour, and its president, Ely Moore, was made one of the three commissioners. The duties of the commission were to examine "all matters relating to the government, economy and discipline of the State Prisons," and to recommend "whether any, and if any, what mechanical branches carried on at . . . the prisons ought to be discontinued by reason of its injurious competition with the labour of mechanics or artisans out of the prisons. . . ."

After several months' work the commission submitted what to the Union was an entirely unsatisfactory report. It approved the prison labour system as a whole and recommended only minor changes. "Common humanity," it said, "requires that the lives, bodily health and mental sanity of confined convicts shall be preserved, and experience has demonstrated, that this can only be done by active employment." [52] Moreover, the chief "burthen of all that has been heretofore written, read and acted upon the subject, has been to make prisons produc-

49 New York *Courier and Enquirer*, Oct. 25, 1833.

50 *Pennsylvanian*, Dec. 9, 1833, from the New York *Courier and Enquirer*.

51 On August 21, mechanics "from the several counties of the State of New York" held an anti-prison labour convention at Utica. Ninety-nine delegates were present, representing thirty-four trades. A state central committee of six was appointed with headquarters at Utica, and a committee of two for each county to manage the correspondence between the several counties and between the counties and central committee. Each county was also asked to appoint an executive committee to carry on agitation within its boundary. Resolutions were adopted to hold annual conventions and to recommend to "Brother Mechanics" that in the future, in voting for legislators, they should vote for such only as "will oppose this Monopoly." A call for a second convention appeared in 1835, to meet at Utica on the third Wednesday in August, but no evidence of the convention itself has been found. *The Man*, Sept. 11, 1834; New York *Daily Advertiser*, Jan. 23, 1835; New York *Evening Post*, July 18, 1835.

52 *Report of the Commissioners appointed by the Governor under the "Act concerning State Prisons,"* New York *Assembly Documents*, 1835, No. 135, p. 14.

tive; to relieve the people from taxation for their maintenance. This grand desideratum has been at last attained, and it is indeed a matter of congratulation, and well worth the effort it has cost, and the consideration it has received." [53] The suggestion that, if convicts must be employed, they should be employed "in the construction of roads, canals, or other public works," the commissioners declared impracticable. Such would not lessen the evil, for free labour is employed there too. Nor is it otherwise practicable, "as there are no State works of permanent continuance to be done." [54] The commissioners recommended that contracts be limited in time, that only goods supplied by importation be manufactured in prisons, that the number of convicts employed in any one trade be limited, that no new trades be taught to convicts, and that contractors be charged such an amount as would prevent them from underselling the market.[55] They recommended that the business of lock making be discontinued. It was improper and "dangerous to the public safety" to teach convicts that trade.[56]

Ely Moore subscribed to the report, but a public meeting of workingmen condemned it. "A more deceptive report," they said, "has never been made on the present State Prison system." In preparing it, the commissioners denied the "Working Mechanics" a hearing, having declared them "interested witnesses," but at the same time they made use of 2,000 circulars sent out by the agent of the Auburn prison, "who was interested in the perpetuation of the present system." [57] In the Union there was a division as to the retention of Moore as president. The report appeared in January, 1835, and at the February meeting the delegates representing the stonecutters and curriers introduced letters from their societies calling upon Moore to resign. It was their opinion, as the curriers stated it, "that he has deserted the cause of the Mechanics and Workingmen." [58] The letters were rejected, but a committee was appointed to review the report and make such recommendations as it saw fit.[59] The committee, however, could

53 *Ibid.*, 17.
54 *Ibid.*, 16.
55 *Ibid.*, 18–22.
56 *Ibid.*, 28.
57 Proceedings of an "unusually large meeting of the mechanics and others opposed to the State Prison Monopoly," held at Tammany Hall, Feb. 24, 1835, in *The Man*, Feb. 26, 1835.
58 *Ibid.*, Mar. 30, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 235.
59 *The Man*, Mar. 2, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 230.

not come to an agreement and after three months was discharged.[60]

By 1835 the local banks had the ascendancy in the monetary affairs of the country. They were increasing in number and enlarging their issues. Business became brisk and speculative, and prices began to rise. Under this influence the different societies again became active in an effort to gain control of their trades.

The activities of the societies were reflected in the Union. It met as often as two and three times a month to consider grievances and indorse strikes. The New York *Journal of Commerce* again spoke of a "'turn-out' operation going on," the object of which as usual was "to obtain higher wages." "The different trades," it said, "are combined together in what is called a 'Trades' Union,' and each in its turn is supported by the other in striking for higher wages."[61]

Most of the strikes were successful and the Union was in the height of enthusiasm. It was during this year that it attempted to erect a "Trades' Union Hall,"[62] to issue a daily newspaper, and to establish an "intelligence office, or room of call," where journeymen out of employment and belonging to the Union could call "and leave their names and Trade, and the employers wanting hands . . . directed there for them."[63]

The newspaper project, however, was the only one that bore fruit. The paper was established as a co-operative enterprise among the different member societies but was managed by the Union itself through a board of directors.[64] Its object, according to a prospectus issued in February, 1836,[65] was "to advocate the cause and defend the rights of the producing classes, to encourage the formation of Trades' Unions, and to promote concert of action and harmony between those already formed." It will be the duty of this paper also, it said, "to correct mis-

60 *The Man*, Mar. 30, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 233, 240; *National Trades' Union*, May 30, 1835. The legislature embodied the recommendations of the commission in an act passed May 11, 1835. It provided that no trades should be taught convicts except those of which the products were supplied by importation; that contracts for services of prisoners should be limited to six months unless otherwise directed by the inspectors; and that the manufacture of silk should be introduced into the prisons from cocoons to be grown there or bought outside.

61 Apr. 3, 1835.

62 *National Trades' Union*, Oct. 17, 1835.

63 *The Man*, Mar. 2, 1835.

64 *National Trades' Union*, Feb. 27, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 289.

65 *National Trades' Union*, Feb. 27, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 293.

representation of the objects or acts of the Trades' Unions generally, or of slanders against individuals belonging to them." Besides, it set for itself the following ambition:

"1st. To devote its columns exclusively to subjects of political economy and general politics, under which head it will be our duty to inquire into the whole extent of evils under which the producing classes are suffering. 2d. To publish such Congressional and Legislative proceedings as our limited space will admit. 3d. To give a general view of foreign and domestic news. 4th. To note improvements in the mechanic arts, and scientific discoveries; and 5th. To furnish biographical, historical and literary notices, and such other miscellaneous matter as may be deemed useful, instructive, and entertaining. Party politics and religious or irreligious discussions will be excluded from its columns."

Notwithstanding this renewed disavowal of party politics, four months later, on June 13, the Union held a public meeting and declared for "the constitutional and safe antidote of the ballot box." [66]

In 1836, as prices continued to rise and the different trades continued to demand higher wages, the employers, too, began to organise. They blamed the Union for the increasing arrogance of their employés and determined to crush it. There is throughout the city of New York, said the *National Laborer*, "a perfect fury against the Working Men or rather against the Trades' Unions. This excitement has proved to the Working Men that their anticipations of the efficacy of Trades' Unions have been realised." [67] It was at this time that the Union raised its dues from 6¼ cents a month to 12½ cents a week.[68] Presently a report of a decision of the supreme court of New York, handed down in 1835, in which a shoemakers' society was declared a combination to injure trade and commerce, appeared in the daily papers.[69] The employers took up the decision and made a test case of the journeymen tailors then on strike. Twenty of them were arrested "for conspiracy to injure trade and commerce, and for riot and assault and battery, etc." [70]

66 *National Laborer*, June 18, 1836, from the New York *Union*; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 322.

67 Apr. 2, 1836.

68 *National Trades' Union*, Mar. 26, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 296.

69 See below, I, 407, 408, People *v.* Fisher *et al.*, 14 Wendell, 10 (1835); *National Trades' Union*, Mar. 12, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 294.

70 See below, I, 408 *et seq.* People *v.* Faulkner, New York *Courier and Enquirer*, May 31, 1836; New York *Journal of Commerce*, May 31, 1836; New York

The court followed the opinion expressed in the decision of the shoemakers' case and found the tailors guilty of a like offence.

It was in protest against this decision that the workingmen turned to politics. On Monday afternoon, June 13, 1836, "Mechanics and Working Men assembled in immense numbers in the Park, fronting the City Hall," to express their opinions "of the high-handed measures taken by Judge Edwards to destroy the Rights of the producing classes." An analogy was drawn between their own combinations and "that holy combination of that immortal band of Mechanics, who despite the injury inflicted upon 'trade and commerce,' 'conspired, confederated, and agreed,' and by overt acts did throw into Boston Harbour the Tea that had branded upon it 'Taxation without Representation.'" "This now is the substance of our grievances," it was declared. "We are taxed but not represented, our legislators, our judges, are men, whose situation in life, will not admit of sympathising with the 'back bone of the body politic.'" When the producers are compelled "by combinations of Bankers, of Merchants, and dealers in all exchangeable commodities" to combine in self-defence, "the hideous yells of wolves, 'learned in the legal lore,' are immediately heard; and the strong arm of tyranny and injustice is interposed to crush the toil worn labourer." At the same time the laws "are so mystified that men of common understandings, cannot unravel them — construction is forced upon construction — mystification is heaped upon mystification, and precedent is furnished upon precedent, to show that what the people thought was liberty, bore not a semblance to its name." In conclusion it was decided that a convention be held at Utica on September 15, "to take into consideration the propriety of forming a separate and distinct party, around which the labouring classes and their friends, can rally with confidence." [71]

PHILADELPHIA

In Philadelphia there were two separate trades' unions organised in close succession. The first, with the ambitious

Evening Post, June 13, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 315–333.

[71] *National Laborer*, June 18, 1836, quoted from the New York *Union*; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 318. See below, chap. vi, I, 461 *et seq.*, for the account of the larger political movement into which this agitation became merged.

name, "Trades' Union of Pennsylvania," was begun in August, 1833, and disappeared in December of the same year. The second, "the Trades' Union of the City and County of Philadelphia," was begun in 1833, and after a career of superb enthusiasm and success dwindled out of sight in August, 1838. The two associations had different constituencies. The first was composed of delegates from the factory districts surrounding Philadelphia, the second, of mechanics of the city. The latter was afterwards opened to factory workers and even day labourers.

In August, 1833, the cotton operatives of Manayunk held a meeting and issued an appeal to "an enlightened and generous public."[72] They said they were obliged by their employers to labour thirteen hours a day in an unhealthful atmosphere, for wages barely sufficient for the necessaries of life. Now their employers proposed to reduce their wages 20 per cent because cotton had risen in price. "We have long suffered the evils of being divided in our sentiments, but the universal oppression that we now feel, have roused us to a sense of our oppressed condition and we are now determined to be oppressed no longer." And they close with a postscript: "We should like to hear from the different Trades' Unions throughout the United States, concerning their regulations, etc." The result of this call was the Trades' Union of Pennsylvania.

At a meeting three months later[73] the Union had delegates from Blockley, Gulf Mills, Brandywine, Pike Creek, Roseville, Haddington, Haverford, Norristown, Manayunk, and Germantown —"chiefly manufacturing districts"— and the house carpenters of Philadelphia. Its object was "the ten hours system of labour, adequate wages, and general information on such subjects as may be most beneficial and useful to the working classes in general." It appointed a committee to wait upon the newly forming "mechanics' union" and to suggest the propriety of uniting "with them for the general weal of the farmers, mechanics and other workingmen of Pennsylvania."

This is the last we hear of the Union Its leader, John Ferral, a hand loom weaver, afterwards rose to leadership in the

[72] *Pennsylvanian*, Aug. 28, 1833; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 330–334.
[73] *Ibid.*, Aug. 28, 1833.

mechanics' union to which reference was made, and in 1835 became president of the "National Trades' Union."

The "Mechanics' Union" had its first meeting in November.[74] Three societies were represented, the tailors, the bookbinders, and the cordwainers. They decided to form a General Trades' Union, "on a similar basis to those already in existence in New York and Baltimore." They invited other societies to send delegates and appealed to trades not having societies "to form themselves as soon as practicable." One month later twelve societies were represented. The following March delegates from seventeen societies took their seats and elected the first set of officers under a constitution copied from New York. Meanwhile an official paper, *The Trades' Union,* had been started, and it announced that since the success of the General Trades' Union had been discovered "almost every Trade belonging to it has received a more rapid increase of members than formerly, and the Mechanics of several Trades who could not confide in Societies depending upon their individual resources, have united and joined it."[75] Among the seventeen societies was the "Blockley and Haverford Association," a remnant of the Trades' Union of Pennsylvania.[76] The others were Philadelphia societies of cordwainers, brush makers, shell-comb makers, hatters, tobacconists, printers, moulders, stonecutters, umbrella makers, leather-dressers (two societies), and harnessmakers.

But the year 1834 was a year of depression and it was not until 1835, when prices began to go up and the different trade societies became aggressive in the demand for shorter hours and higher wages, that the Union began to flourish. After several months of agitation and preparation, some sixteen societies, beginning in June, 1835, struck for a ten-hour day.[77] The strikes lasted a little over two weeks and their success was so complete that the Union gained in prestige and in strength.[78]

The year 1836 was thus commenced with enthusiasm. In this year the *National Laborer* was started, and was made the official organ of the Trades' Union. Twenty-one societies

74 *Register of Pennsylvania*, Nov. 30, 1833; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 338.

75 Extract copied in *The Man*, Mar. 10, 1834.

76 *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 18, 1834.

77 See below, I, 389 *et seq.*

78 *Ibid.*

struck in this year, twelve of which demanded higher wages. Four struck against reductions in wages, and the other five, for reasons unknown and other than wages.[79] Those which did not strike made special contributions to the Union to aid those on strike. The cordwainers working on men's shoes met in special meeting in March, voted that each member contribute 50 cents, which would amount to about $400, as a special contribution to the Union, and at the same time agreed to levy a special tax of 12½ cents per week on each member for the first four weeks, and 12 cents a month after that to aid the "Journeymen Bookbinders, Cotton Spinners, &c." At the same meeting they resolved to stand by the Trades' Union "as the last hope of the mechanic and labourer, knowing that if the aristocracy could sever the link which now binds them together, every trade society would be attacked, and would sink in its turn before the corrupting influence of wealth and avarice."[80] The marble labourers likewise voluntarily raised their dues to 12½ cents a week, and the shell-comb makers to 10 cents a week.[81] The hatters' association even relieved the Union of the support of its members as they had "come to the determination of supporting them themselves."[82] At one meeting in April, the monthly dues of the Union amounted to $700 and the donations to $842.[83]

But presently the ominous sign of over-organisation appeared. The horseshoers applied for admission to the Union, but the blacksmiths objected. After much discussion a committee was appointed "to ascertain if a reconciliation could be effected between the two societies."[84] The committee could not agree and at a later meeting handed in a majority and a minority report. Both were lengthy and gave rise "to considerable debate, which resulted in a motion to make the subject a special business of the next stated meeting."[85] At this time a third report was submitted in addition to the other two. Discussion again followed. When the time to adjourn came,

79 See Appendix II, below.

80 *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 4, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 31.

81 *National Laborer*, Apr. 16, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 351.

82 *National Laborer*, Apr. 16, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 351.

83 *National Laborer*, Apr. 16, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 351.

84 *National Laborer*, June 11, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 361.

85 *National Laborer*, July 2, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 371.

the rules were suspended, but the Union finally "adjourned without coming to a decision." [86] Finally the horseshoers withdrew their application.[87] Jurisdictional contests also came up between two societies of hand loom weavers [88] and two societies of leatherdressers,[89] but the issues involved and the outcome are unknown.

While the Union was shaken from within, the opposition from without became menacing. The employers were organising and, as in New York, appealed to the courts.[90] During a parade of some 200 or 300 coal-heavers who were on strike for a 25 cent increase in their daily wages, several were arrested for rioting.[91] They were bound over to the mayor's court and held under bail of $2,500 each. The mayor, it was said, in fixing the bail declared that he was determined "to lay the axe at the root of the Trades' Union." [92]

This threat, together with the excessive bail, aroused the Union to action. It made the labourers' cause its own. For the first time it admitted unskilled labour to membership [93] and appointed a committee "to procure counsel." [94] A writ of habeas corpus was secured and the labourers were brought before Judge Randall's court for examination. The examination lasted several weeks. "The Coal Speculators brought up all their forces, and several of the respectable gentlemen came themselves to testify against the labourers," but the court finally decided, "that there was no evidence of a breach of the peace." [95] The coal dealers then sought to bring charges of conspiracy against the labourers, but here again the court denied that there was ground for an indictment.[96]

Not content with a victory in the court, the Union undertook to strike at the mayor politically. He was to come up for re-election in October. On August 22, 5,000 mechanics and workingmen met in Independence Square, "in the rear of that venerable frame, where liberty first drew breath," to declare

86 *National Laborer*, July 9, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 373.
87 *National Laborer*, July 23, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 374.
88 *National Laborer*, July 2, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 371.
89 *National Laborer*, Nov. 26, 1836.
90 See below, I, 405 *et seq.*
91 *National Laborer*, May 7, 14, and 28, and July 30, 1836. See below, I, 417.
92 *Ibid.*, Aug. 27, 1836.
93 *Ibid.*, May 21, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 359.
94 *Ibid.*
95 *National Laborer*, Aug. 27, 1836.
96 *Ibid.*, June 18, and Aug. 27, 1836.

their opposition to him. The occasion also offered opportunity to register complaints against the protection given to monopolies; against "the existence of rotten monarchical laws, expressly applied to destroy the last prop and support of the hard Working Man;" against "the manner of dividing all offices of trust, profit, and honour, as they ever are among the wealthy," while men of their "own stamp, with feelings analogous" to theirs are barred; against excessive appropriations for colleges while their own children at too early an age are sent to the factory and workshop; and finally against being dragged into the prisons "without any other cause than what malignant hate may devise." In conclusion the meeting resolved that it "cannot and will not support any Councils who may refuse to oppose the re-election of John Swift to the Mayoralty of Philadelphia." [97] Not to leave the impression that the Union was going into party politics a resolution was passed urging "friends" not to be swayed by party names, "but to vote for good men and true, wherever they may be found." [98]

In October another town meeting was held [99] and some ward meetings.[1] The call for the town meeting carried the head lines: "Working Men! Twenty-five Hundred Dollars Bail!!! Remember John Swift!" and announced that English, William Thompson, S. C. Thompson, Hogan, Crossin, Ferral, and others, all prominent in the Union, would speak. But the Council was not to be moved, and re-elected Swift.[2]

After this, little is known of the Union. Many of its member societies were turning to co-operation, having lost faith in the strikes that failed to level wages with the increasing cost of living. Finally the Union itself voted to invest its funds in co-operatives instead of supporting strikes.[3] But presently the panic of 1837 descended and thwarted its plans. In May, 1837, the journeymen house painters and glaziers struck against a reduction in wages, and the Union voted $500 to support them.[4] On August 14, 1838, the last notice found of the Trades' Union

97 *Ibid.*, Aug. 27, 1836. At this time the mayor was elected by the city council which was elected by the people.

98 *Ibid.*

99 *Pennsylvanian*, Oct. 3, 1836.

1 *Ibid.*, Oct. 11, 1836.

2 Mayors of the city of Philadelphia prior to Consolidation, in *Manual of Councils of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1907–1908), 196.

3 See below, I, 466 *et seq.*

4 *National Laborer*, May 10 and 11, 1837.

appeared. In it the societies were reminded "that the Election for Delegates" was to take place.[5]

The life of the Boston Trades' Union was much less spectacular and much shorter than either of the others considered. It was organised in March, 1834, and passed out of existence about a year later. It is distinctive, however, in that it included employers in its membership.

Apparently the division between journeymen and masters was not as complete in this as in other cities. Both made common cause against the merchant-capitalist. "There are in truth but two parties in our country," said "a Boston Mechanic," explaining the anomaly of admitting employers, "that can be said to have distinct interests." These are the "mechanics, farmers, artisans, and all who labour, whether as boss or journeyman" on the one hand, and on the other "the rich men, the professional men, and all who now live, or who intend hereafter to live without useful labour, depending on the sweat of their neighbour's brow for support." "Therefore, since the interest of all who obtain their living by honest labour is substantially the same, since the boss is often brought back to journeywork by hard luck, and the journeyman may expect in his turn to become an employer, while both of them are invariably imposed upon and treated as if belonging to an inferior grade of society by those who live without labour, it surely seems quite desirable that in a union of trades for the common benefit, both journeyman and employer should come together."[6]

At a meeting of workingmen "holden at the Old Common Council Room, Court-Square, School-Street," a committee was appointed to take measures "to effect the formation of a General Trades' Union of the mechanics of the city and vicinity." In February the committee issued a circular calling upon the trades to meet on the first Thursday in March. The circular urged the need of improving "the conditions of the mechanics" of the city and vicinity; it pointed to the trades' unions of New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore in which "employers and

5 *Public Ledger*, Aug. 14, 1833.
6 *The Man*, May 30, 1834; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 92.

employed seem to be harmoniously united for the mutual benefit of both, which ought always to be the case"; and called upon each branch of mechanics to "choose two delegates to represent them in a General Trades' Convention." The circular contemplated a fund "to be devoted to the relief and assistance of those out of employ by accident, sickness, or by any other cause, which will justify the Convention to render such relief." [7]

Some 41 delegates met, representing the 16 trades and organisations of curriers, cabinet and pianoforte makers, tailors, masons, coopers, shipwrights, ropemakers, painters, iron-founders, printers, house carpenters, sail makers, machinists, black and white smiths, the mechanics of the city of Charlestown, and the female shoe binders of Lynn. The latter were represented by two men. Dr. Charles Douglas, former president of the New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics, and other Working Men, and now editor of the *New England Artisan* called the meeting together. James Sharp, a cabinet-maker was appointed chairman, and Dunbar B. Harris, a mason, and Seth Luther, a carpenter and the noted champion of the factory workers, secretaries. Though not a mechanic, Charles Douglas was voted "all the privileges of a regular member," and his paper declared to be "worthy of the patronage of every Working Man through the city and throughout the country." A committee of five was appointed to draft a constitution, and leave was granted it to report at an adjourned meeting.[8]

The Union also issued a "Declaration of Rights" which is indicative of the presence of employers. In it the issues brought forth and emphasised were those that concerned small employers as well as wage-earners, such as education, militia laws, corporations, and equality of legislation, while the wage demands took only the form of a mechanics' lien law and the legalisation of combinations.[9] When the first collision of interests occurred in 1835, in the demand of the carpenters, stone-cutters, and masons for a ten-hour day, the Union collapsed.[10]

7 *The Man*, Feb. 20, 1834.
8 *Ibid.*, Mar. 12, 1834; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 90–92.
9 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, June 14, 1834.
10 See below, I, 388.

CHAPTER III

TRADE UNIONISM IN ACTION

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SUMMARY OF STRIKES, 1833–1837

As soon as the societies organised or got their members together they formulated their demands. For the years from 1833 to 1837 inclusive 173 strikes have been counted.[1] The frequency with which they occurred in the several years corresponds closely to the conditions of the time — return of prosperity in 1833, depression in 1834, an inflated money market

1 See Appendix II, below: Table of Strikes, 1833–1837.

and speculation in 1835 and 1836, and panic and depression in 1837. In 1833, 12 strikes occurred, in 1834, also 12, in 1835, 67, in 1836, 73, and in 1837, 9. In 1833, 11 out of the 12 strikes were aggressive, while in 1834, 2 out of the 12 were aggressive and the other 10 defensive strikes, that is, against a reduction in wages.

In the first year of the speculative period, 1835 and 1836, 55 of the 67 strikes were aggressive, 18 for a ten-hour day, 34 for an increase in wages, 2 for both a ten-hour day and higher wages, and 1 for the closed shop. Of the remaining 12 strikes, 4 were against reduction in wages, the other 8 being miscellaneous and unknown. In the second year 54 of the 73 strikes were aggressive, 1 for a ten-hour day, 51 for higher wages, and 2 for the closed shop. Of the remaining 19, 2 were to maintain a ten-hour day, 10 to maintain wages, and 7 unknown.

The year 1837 was the year of the panic. Three of the 9 strikes counted in this year were defensive, 1 against an increase in hours and 2 to maintain wages, the other 6 being for an increase in wages, of which 4 occurred in the West where the panic had not yet spread.

The strikes during 1833 and 1834 were isolated strikes.[2] Business in the spring of 1833 took an upward swing, and the workingmen followed it up with their demands. The carpenters in New York as already seen, struck for higher wages, won out and became the nucleus about which the General Trades' Union formed. A similar event occurred in Washington. In Baltimore the hatters successfully resisted a reduction of wages in July, and a month later some seventeen trades met to consider the question of a ten-hour day. The machinists, coach makers, bricklayers and painters followed up this meeting with strikes.

Presently Jackson's order that the government deposits be removed from the United States Bank spread depression over

2 A few sporadic strikes occurred during the political period 1829–1832. In 1829, the marble labourers, rubbers and polishers of New York struck for higher wages. (*Democratic Press*, Mar. 24 and 25, 1829.) In Pittsburgh the carpenters struck for higher wages about the same time. (*Democratic Press*, Mar. 25, 1829.) In 1830, the New York stone cutters went on strike against working on material prepared by convict labour. (New York *Sentinel and Working Man's Advocate*, July 3, 1830). In 1831, sixteen hundred tailoresses were on strike in New York for five weeks. (Carey, *Select Excerpta*, IV, 11–12, see Andrews and Bliss, *History of Women in Trade Unions*, 36–37). In 1832, the marble workers of Philadelphia turned out for higher wages (*Co-operator*, June 2, 1832).

the country. A period of hard times followed which lasted during the remainder of 1833 and during the following year with the result that aggressive strikes gave way to defensive ones. The cotton operatives in Manayunk, near Philadelphia, complained of a proposed reduction in wages and invited correspondence from the trades' unions throughout the United States. In Philadelphia, the Association of Journeymen Hatters of the City and Liberties of Philadelphia, after a struggle begun in 1831, was forced to yield to a reduction of wages in 1833. It suspended its bill of prices and remained in a prostrate condition throughout this and the following year, and did not fully recover until 1836.[3] In the spring of 1834, the journeymen shoemakers of New York appealed to all cordwainers to stand together to resist a reduction in wages and urged that "the only prospect of security is union."[4] The locksmiths of the city were organising in October of the same year for a similar purpose. "Unless we come forward," wrote one who signed himself "One Oppressed," "and assert our rights at this time, when the master locksmiths are about reducing the wages of the journeymen we shall ever after have cause to regret that we were sleeping when we should be at our posts strengthening ourselves. . . . Let three, four, five, or as many as can meet together call a meeting of the trade and form an association . . . and I have no doubt but that we shall be successful. . . ."[5] Other trades in New York that were forced to resist a reduction in wages in this year were the sailors,[6] Brussels carpet makers,[7] and hatters.[8] The employing hatters forced two successive reductions upon their journeymen, and then declared "that they would not employ any journeyman who belonged to, or was connected with the 'General Trades' Union.'"[9] The Union held a special meeting to protest "the attempt at proscription," and passed resolutions declaring "that if the employers persist in endeavoring to destroy the Association of Hat Makers," they would resort to such measures as would enable them "effectually to reach their interests." The measure intended was the boy-

3 *National Laborer*, 1836.
4 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, June 14, 1834.
5 *Ibid.*, Oct. 4, 1834.
6 New York *Evening Post*, Apr. 24, 1834.
7 *National Trades' Union*, Sept. 6, 1834.
8 *Ibid.*, Dec. 13 and 20, 1834.
9 *National Trades' Union*, Dec. 13 and 20, 1834; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 222.

cott. "The employers," however, "were wholesale dealers, and not engaged in the retail business," and therefore could not be met "on their own grounds," according to a committee report.[10]

THE TEN-HOUR MOVEMENT, 1833–1835

The isolated strikes of 1833 and 1834 were followed by a general demand for a ten-hour day in 1835. Custom had fixed the length of the day's work from sunrise to sunset, averaging thirteen to fourteen hours during the summer months. With the first return of prosperity in 1835 the workingmen demanded that the hours be reduced to ten.

This demand had already been made in the preceding decade.[11] But it was not concerted, nor did it cover as wide a range of trades or territory as it did during the flush period of trade unionism in the thirties. With the exception of New York City, where the events of 1829 had confirmed the ten-hour day, the demand became general along the coast. Even the cotton factory operatives, consisting of men, women, and children, attempted to reduce their hours. Indeed, one of the most bitter strikes of the entire period was that of the factory hands in Paterson, who in 1835 demanded that their hours be reduced from thirteen and a half to eleven hours a day, but went back to work on a twelve-hour basis.[12]

The chief argument advanced for the shorter day continued to be that of citizenship. That long hours were injurious to health was pretty well recognised. Excessive labour which the mechanic is forced to undergo, said the *Pennsylvanian*,[13] speaking approvingly of a communication in its columns on the ten-hour system, "saps his constitution, and either cuts him off at a period of existence which should be the prime of life, or leaves him linger out a few years more, a miserable wreck of humanity." But it was not until the factory system became more fully developed than it was at this time, that the health argument took first place. At this time equal citizenship was uppermost

10 *National Trades' Union*, Dec. 20, 1834; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 222.

11 See above, I, 158 *et seq.*; I, 186 *et seq.*

12 See below, I, 420–422.

13 *Proceedings of the Government and Citizens of Philadelphia, on the Reduction of the Hours of Labor and Increase of Wages*, published by a Committee of Boston Mechanics, July, 1835. The arguments put forward here for the ten-hour day were approved by workingmen of both Philadelphia and Boston.

in the minds of the workingmen. "Politically," said the *Pennsylvanian,* in 1835, "it is of immense importance that a change should be effected. Our institutions place all power in the hands of the very men who are now in a great measure debarred from mental improvement, and shut out from the mental cultivation which can render them capable of wielding their tremendous strength to the advantage of our common country." Workingmen, it said, were charged with being misled by demagogues and catch-words of party; and with entertaining political principles subversive of good government. With increased numbers but decreased intelligence they would become a mischief. "Of late these croakings have been continually ringing in our ears." "We will not attempt to gainsay them," it said, "but content ourselves with pointing to that which they will doubtless acknowledge to be the palladium of liberty: allow these men who are to be so dangerous, the leisure for mental cultivation. Error is the result of ignorance, and to guard against the one it is necessary to remove the other. The working man asks time for improvement. Give it to him." [14]

To the workingmen the citizenship argument encompassed intellectual, social, and political improvement, but they saw in it also other possibilities. When they first asked for more leisure, the employers scoffed at the idea and said that the time thus taken from work would only be spent in idleness and debauchery. The workingmen resented this charge and spent more oratory on it than on any other of the arguments. It may not have been a vital factor in the adoption of the ten-hour day, but it no doubt created sentiment in its behalf. They pointed out that intemperance was a result of overwork rather than of leisure. "Humanity," asserted the *Pennsylvanian,* "requires us not to abuse the brute creation by over-labour, and surely our fellow-man is entitled to as much consideration." "Exhaustion of the frame requires for its removal, excitement fully proportioned to the depression, and it is too often sought in alcohol. It has been ascertained, and truly, that excessive labour has been the cause of more intemperance than all other causes combined." [15]

The employers also objected on the ground that a reduction

[14] *Ibid.* [15] *Ibid.*

in the number of hours would lessen the amount of labour performed. To that the advocates of the system answered in the words of John Ferral, of Philadelphia, that "the vital change that will be effected in the physical condition of the labourer, arising from the cheerful spirit which will accompany him in his daily toil of ten hours," would enable him to "perform an equal, if not a greater amount of labour, with less animal exhaustion than could be expected under the 'day break to dark night system.'" [16]

Already in 1833, when labour first became aggressive, and fully two years before the demand became general, the workingmen in Washington and Baltimore demanded a ten-hour day. In the former city it was confined to the carpenters, who decided to break through "a custom that bound them to stand at their benches from fifteen to seventeen hours, for the paltry sum of one dollar and thirty-seven and one-half cents," [17] but in Baltimore it extended over seventeen trades. Early in August, at an "adjourned meeting of the Mechanics," a committee representing the ship-joiners, shipwrights, house carpenters, riggers, sail makers, house and ship painters, blacksmiths, blockmakers, tailors, bricklayers, rope makers, boat-builders, coopers, cabinetmakers, plumbers, shoemakers, and wheelwrights was appointed to ascertain the sentiment of employers on the ten-hour system.[18] Soon after the separate trades met and resolved to stand for a ten-hour day.

The bricklayers were among the first to declare their intentions. At a public meeting held on August 13, they pointed to the general movement among the "brother mechanics of the city," and declared that since bricklayers were more exposed, since they start earlier, and stop later than almost any other mechanics, and since "a man after toiling fifteen hours exposed to the scorching rays of the Summer Sun, returns to his house worried and dejected," so that he "feels no relish for society or improvement," but throws himself down to sleep "till the light of the coming day recalls him to renew his labour," they

[16] *Radical Reformer and Working Man's Advocate*, July 4, 1835.

[17] Extracts from an *Oration delivered before the Trades' Union of the District of Columbia*, at the City Hall, in Washington, July 4, 1834. *National Trades' Union*, Aug. 30, 1834.

[18] Baltimore *Republican and Commercial Advertiser*, Aug. 2, 1833.

would not from April 1 to September 1 start earlier than six o'clock in the morning nor work later than six in the evening, reserving one hour for breakfast and one hour for dinner.[19] The blacksmiths, engineers and machinists, painters and coach makers followed with similar declarations, and others who had piece work, as comb makers, declared for higher rates in order that they might be able to work fewer hours.[20]

The blacksmiths, engineers, and machinists who included in their membership metal-turners, brass and iron-founders, pattern makers, and millwrights, were the most persistent in their demands. When their committee, appointed to interview the employers, reported that the latter were in favour of a reduction provided it became general, they gave them three days to decide one way or the other. The employers decided against them and a strike followed. They laid their cause before the mayor of the city whom the mechanics had helped to elect and who was friendly to them. Without committing himself he replied that in his opinion it is "the undoubted right of every individual to determine the number of hours which shall constitute his day's labour," and "that it is his duty to reserve sufficient time for the preservation of health, and the enjoyment of rest." [21] They also appealed to other influential persons in the city and received similar replies.

Just how long this and the other strikes lasted is not certain. At the end of August we find the coach makers voting "that a request be again made of such Master Coachmakers as have not given their assent," [22] and the metal workers thanking the hatters for donations for those of their trade "who have been thrown out of employment." [23] Nor do we know how these strikes ended. Some of the trades may have won the ten-hour day, but it is certain that the system was not permanently established at this time, for two years later, in 1835, we find the bricklayers and carpenters again striking for the same object.[24]

The year 1835 was the banner year of the ten-hour movement. It started in Boston, and from there spread as far south as Baltimore, including in its sweep Philadelphia and seven

19 *Ibid.*, Aug. 19, 1833.
20 See Appendix II, below.
21 Baltimore *Republican and Commercial Advertiser*, Aug. 24, 1833.
22 *Ibid.*, Aug. 21, 1833.
23 *Ibid.*, Aug. 29, 1833.
24 *Ibid.*, June 24, 1835.

other smaller places, Salem, Massachusetts, Hartford, Connecticut, Batavia, Seneca Falls, and Albany, New York, and Paterson and New Brunswick, New Jersey.[25] The carpenters in Boston, who twice had been defeated in an effort to establish a ten-hour day, once in 1825, and again in 1832, made another attempt in 1835. This time, however, they did not stand alone but were joined by the masons and stonecutters.

Before they declared the strike the members of the three crafts met in the Old Council Room on April 27, and appointed a committee "to consider and report on the subject of the hours of labour." The committee reported in favour of the ten-hour day, but advised that individual efforts be made to establish the system. Each one should persuade himself and his employer that he ought not to work more than ten hours a day.[26] The character of this report can be ascribed to the presence of employers, as already indicated, in the workingmen's organisations of Boston. The journeymen, however, rejected the report and declared a strike.

One of the first acts of the strikers was to issue a circular addressed "to all branches of Mechanical labour in the City, the Commonwealth and elsewhere," in order to lay before them the reasons of the ensuing struggle.[27] "We have been too long subjected," it said, "to the odious, cruel, unjust and tyrannical system which compels the operative Mechanic to exhaust his physical and mental powers. . . . We have rights, and we have duties to perform as American Citizens and members of society, which forbids us to dispose of more than Ten Hours for a day's work." The address controverted the charge that leisure would encourage debauchery, and challenged the world to deny "that excessive labour has been the immediate cause of more intemperance than all other causes combined."

The brunt of the attack, however, was directed against the "Capitalist," that is, the owners of the buildings erected and the real estate brokers. Apparently, as in the two earlier strikes, the employer was a small contractor who by a "stroke of hard luck" might himself be reduced to a journeyman. "We would not be too severe on our employers," the circular

25 See Appendix II. below.

26 *National Trades' Union*, May 9, 1835.

27 *The Man*, May 13, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, VI. 94.

said; "they are slaves to the capitalists, as we are to them. 'The power behind' their 'throne is greater than the throne itself.' But we cannot bear to be servants of servants and slaves to oppression, let the source be where it may."

The details of the strike are not known, but we know that it won sympathy throughout the country. The circular paved the way for a committee which, in July, visited the different cities on the Atlantic coast to solicit aid for the strikers. The committee was warmly received wherever it went. In Philadelphia, when the committee, in company with delegates from New York, Newark, and Paterson, arrived, the Trades' Union held a special meeting and resolved to stand by the "Boston House Wrights" who, "in imitation of the noble and decided stand taken by their Revolutionary Fathers, have determined to throw off the shackles of more mercenary tyrants than theirs." [28] The carpenters, weavers, hatters, tailors, cordwainers, bricklayers, bookbinders, and labourers, voted varying sums of money in aid of the strikers.[29]

Just when the strike ended is not certain. It is probable that it lasted seven months, from the beginning of May, when it first started, until late in November, when we learn that it had ended. We know, however, that it was lost. In spite of the perseverance of the strikers and the support they won over the country, this strike met the fate of the two other ten-hour strikes in Boston. It is probable that the lack of a clearcut division between journeyman and master was responsible for its defeat.[30] "We were obliged," wrote the president of the carpenters' union to the president of the Trades' Union of New York, "to acknowledge the defeat of our fondest wishes and our most ardent desires." But still sanguine, he hoped that the defeat would retard success for a short time only, "as the impression we have produced must necessarily render success inevitable at no distant period." He hoped that in the coming winter measures would be taken that would establish "in an amicable manner" the ten-hour day.[31]

In Philadelphia the ten-hour movement took on the aspect of

28 *Pennsylvanian*, July 31, 1835; *National Trades' Union*, Aug. 1, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 251.

29 *National Trades' Union*, Jan. 2, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 280.

30 The plasterers, however, were said to have won the ten-hour system in August, 1835. *Radical Reformer and Working Man's Advocate*, Aug. 8, 1835.

31 *Ibid.*; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 279.

a crusade. Not only the building trades, as in Boston, but most of the mechanical branches were involved. Street parades and mass meetings were held. The public press, both friendly and hostile, editorialised over it. Work was suspended, and after but a brief "standout," the whole ended in a complete victory for the workingmen.

The coal-heavers, common labourers working on the Schuylkill docks, started the movement. They struck for the ten-hour day and, in the attempt to prevent others from taking their jobs, riotous scenes occurred which attracted considerable attention. The general press condemned and the friendly vindicated them, admitting that "some few individuals have behaved in an objectionable manner."[32] Meanwhile the Boston circular mentioned above reached the city. "The effect was electric," said John Ferral. The Trades' Union had it reprinted and distributed broadcast; it "became the absorbing topic of conversation." A mass meeting was held and resolutions were passed approving the action of the coal-heavers and endorsing the principle of the ten-hour system.[33]

Within the next few days most of the building trades, the carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers, masons, hod-carriers, and painters declared that they would not work more than ten hours, and in some instances, as in the case of the carpenters, suspended work. Then followed the leather-dressers, black and white smiths, and plumbers with similar declarations. The cordwainers, who were piece-workers and who were among the first to strike, but for higher wages, now argued that they wanted higher rates so that they might be able to work fewer hours. The cigar makers, saddlers, and printers, who also were piece-workers, advanced the same argument and presently declared their intentions to strike. The bakers joined in by demanding that baking, on Saturday night and Sunday, be discontinued, and the clerks asked that the stores be closed at early candlelight.[34]

The excitement was intense. "The times," said the Philadelphia *Gazette*,[35] "are completely out of joint. . . . Our streets and squares are crowded with an idle population. Some

[32] *The Man*, June 6, 1835, copied from the Philadelphia *Sun*.
[33] *Pennsylvanian*, June 4, 1835.
[34] *Ibid.*, June 23, 1835.
[35] Copied in the New York *Journal of Commerce*, June 8, 1835.

manifestations of violence have already taken place; and if the difference be not accommodated the excitement will probably be increased. Our buildings are at a stand, and business generally is considerably impeded." The labourers, cordwainers, and carpenters organised processions and marched through the streets of the city with fife and drum and flags, bearing the inscription, "From 6 to 6." When the procession reached the public works the men there stopped work and fell into line. "We marched to the public works," said John Ferral, "and the workmen joined in with us. . . . Employment ceased, business was at a standstill, shirt sleeves were rolled up, apron on, working tools in hand were the orders of the day." "Had the cannon of an invading enemy belched forth its challenge on our soil," he said, "the freemen of Philadelphia could not have shown a greater ardour for the contest; the blood sucking aristocracy, they alone stood aghast; terror stricken, they thought the day of retribution was come, but no vengeance was sought or inflicted by the people for the wrongs they had suffered from their enemies." [36]

The common council soon after the cessation of work announced a ten-hour day for public servants. "The hours of labour of the workingmen employed under the authorities of the City Corporation," it enacted, "shall be, from 'Six to Six,' during the summer season, allowing one hour for breakfast, and one for dinner." [37]

The commissioners of the district of Southwark, a suburb of Philadelphia, followed the example and not only reduced the number of hours to ten, but also raised the wages of the labourers from 87½ cents a day to $1 a day.[38]

The tide now began to favour labour. Other classes became interested and took sides with the workingmen. At a meeting held June 6 in the State House yard, not only mechanics participated, but also lawyers, physicians, merchants, and politicians. Here, after an effusion of speeches, resolutions were passed endorsing the demands for a ten-hour day and a corresponding advance in the price of piece-workers.[39] The *Pennsylvanian*,[40] reporting the meeting, said: "The great size of

[36] *The Man*, June 29, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 39.

[37] New York *Journal of Commerce*, June 8, 1835.

[38] *Pennsylvanian*, June 8, 1835.

[39] *Ibid.*, June 9, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 44.

[40] June 8, 1835.

the assemblage on Saturday, and the unanimity manifested throughout, is a satisfactory proof that the feelings of the community are decidedly in favour of the cause," and the result will be "the establishment on an immovable basis of the Ten-Hour system." Even the New York *Journal of Commerce*,[41] perhaps the most hostile paper to the cause of labour at the time, writing on "The Turn-Outs in Philadelphia," now conceded that ten hours a day was enough for any person engaged in labour requiring much physical exertion, but "What we object to," it said, "is not the thing sought . . . but the means of attaining it. . . . For the precedent is full of mischief, if such is to be the reward of turn-outs, there will be no end to them."

The employers could resist the popular demand no longer. On June 8, we read that the master carpenters voted by a large majority to grant a ten-hour day.[42] Three days later the master cordwainers met in public meeting and resolved, that since the "journeymen cordwainers of the ladies branch participating in the general desire of bettering the condition of mechanics, have struck for an advance of wages," "we do hereby agree to comply with their demands generally, and pledge ourselves to do all in our power to support and sustain them." At this meeting it was also voted to raise the price of shoes so as to shift the increased cost of labour to the consumer.[43] From time to time other employers met and similarly agreed to stand by the journeymen.

Just when the individual strikes ended is not certain. But on June 22, in a letter written by John Ferral to Seth Luther, of Boston, we read that the "mechanics of Philadelphia stood firm and true; they conquered, because they were united and resolute in their actions. Those presses which could not retard the progress of public opinion, nor divert it from its just objects, viz., the adoption of the ten-hour system for a day and a correspondent advance of wages for piece workers, now proclaim the triumph of our bloodless revolution." [44]

This was a revolution indeed. It marked the turning point in this country from the "sun to sun" agricultural system, to

41 June 8, 1835.

42 New York *Journal of Commerce*, June 8, 1835.

43 *Pennsylvanian*, June 15, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 27.

44 *The Man*, June 29, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 39 *et seq.*

the "six to six" industrial system. The victory in Philadelphia was so overwhelming and was given so much publicity that its influence extended to small towns, such as New Brunswick and Paterson, New Jersey; Batavia and Seneca Falls, New York; Hartford, Connecticut; and Salem, Massachusetts; where, in this year, the mechanics demanded a ten-hour day. In Newark, New Jersey; Albany, Troy, and Schenectady, New York; where we find no evidence of ten-hour strikes in 1835, we nevertheless learn that the system was in use among most mechanical branches.[45] At the close of the year 1835, excluding Boston, where only the plasterers succeeded in reducing their hours, ten hours became the standard day's work for most of the city mechanics who worked by the day.

There was one exception, namely, municipal and government works. Instead of taking the lead in improving working conditions, the cities and national government stood at this time in the way. In those places where the workingmen won the ten-hour day, the municipalities also reduced the hours to ten, but in those places where they lost, they also lost in municipal works. Thus in Philadelphia, where labour was overwhelmingly victorious, the common council, as we have seen, also reduced the hours to ten, but in Boston, where it lost, the aldermen voted that "the petitioners have leave to withdraw their petition."[46]

As regards employment on works of the Federal Government it was different. The officials in charge did not yield so freely to local public sentiment. It took about five years, long after the workingmen's organisations that first petitioned for the ten-hour day had disappeared, before the system was generally established. Thus the navy-yards were most stubborn in holding on to the old system.

Early in 1835, the mechanics in New York and Brooklyn petitioned the Secretary of the Navy and the Board of Navy Commissioners to reduce the hours to ten,[47] but their petition was returned to them with the advice "that it would not be for the interest of the government" to grant it. They next turned to Congress. But this task the national organisation of working-

[45] *National Trades' Union*, Oct. 10, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 253, 254.

[46] Boston *Courier*, July 9, 1835.

[47] *National Trades' Union*, Oct. 10, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 232–234.

men, which, as we shall see later, appeared in 1834, was best suited to undertake. At its national convention held in October, 1835, the results of the Brooklyn and New York petitions were discussed and the Board of Navy Commissioners was branded as "petty tyrants." When aggrieved it was "the sacred right of freemen to petition for a redress." The Navy officials ill-treated the mechanics employed in the Navy Yards, and they now decided to petition "the immediate representatives of the people." "I am of the opinion," said a leather-dresser, "that Congress cannot deny us this right. For when the Navy officers petitioned for an advance of their salaries, that they might be able to support the 'dignity of American Citizens abroad,' they granted them their request. And can it be presumed that they will deny the citizen Mechanic a reduction in the hours of labour, so as to enable him to enjoy the comforts of an 'American Citizen' at home? No." "For, Mechanics," he added, "we now have a representative in the National Legislature [Ely Moore] who, to use his own words, 'will neither shrink from the task, nor despair of success'; and with such an advocate as this, we have but little to fear from the aristocracy of the House." [48]

Their disappointment was as great as their hope was fervent. The memorial was presented to the House through Ely Moore, the labour Congressman from New York, but it was referred to the committee on roads and canals and never returned. Others that came from separate unions were tabled.[49] "Unlike the memorials of individuals for large donations of money, or the advance of officers' salaries," said a report on the ten-hour system on government works to the 1836 convention of the National Trades' Union, "it was never noticed, or if noticed at all, only to receive the insults and sneers of 'the honourable'—the people's servants. From motives concealed from the American people, no action was taken on the subject, and the memorial now lies on their table, probably never to be acted upon." [50]

Meanwhile, in the summer of 1836, the shipwrights, joiners,

[48] *Ibid.*

[49] *House Journal*, 24 Cong., 1st Sess. (1835), 407, 444, 473, 511, 531, 552, 829, 853.

[50] *National Laborer*, Dec. 10, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 300.

and others engaged in the navy-yard at Philadelphia struck for a ten-hour day and appealed to the President for relief. They would have nothing further to do with Congress. They had supported the President in his fight against the United States Bank and now sought a return favour. At a town meeting of "citizens, mechanics and workingmen," a committee was appointed to lay the issue before him. He proved more pliable than Congress and ordered the system established.[51]

The experiment in Philadelphia was an example to others. At the next national convention of workingmen held in Philadelphia in 1836, it was concluded that better results would attend an application to the President than to Congress, "for various reasons not necessary to mention."[52] The President could be more effectively reached through the ballot-box than could Congress. In this way the campaign was started which led President Van Buren to issue, on March 31, 1840, the famous executive order establishing the ten-hour day on all government works.[53]

Thus by 1840 at least, the principle of the ten-hour day was established in most mechanical branches. The cotton factories alone were the exception. They continued to work 11, 12, and 13 hours a day until the following decade, when legislation threatened to reduce them to 10, if they did not do so themselves.

THE CLIMAX OF THE WAGE MOVEMENT, 1836–1837

The ten-hour day won in 1835, labour demanded higher wages in 1836. Out of the sixty-nine strikes that occurred in the latter year, only one, at Lockport, New York, in which the building trades participated, was for a ten-hour day.[54] Two, however, were to maintain the ten-hour day already won, one at Baltimore, in which the masons were involved,[55] and the other at Philadelphia, in which the shipwrights were involved.[56] The remaining known strikes, with the exception of two, were concerned with wages.

In New York City as early as 1835 strikes for higher wages

51 *Ibid.*

52 *Ibid.*

53 *Messages and Papers of the President, 1789–1897*, III, 602, in *Miscellaneous Documents of the House of Representatives.*

54 *National Trades' Union*, Mar. 19, 1836.

55 Baltimore *Republican and Commercial Advertiser*, Mar. 4, 1836.

56 Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, Aug. 20, 1836.

predominated. Here the ten-hour day had been won in the twenties. But these strikes aimed to standardise wages as much as to increase them. During the depression from 1831 to 1833 the workingmen, owing to the absence or weakness of societies, lost control of their trades. Employers paid different prices for the same work and very often paid below the usual prices. In 1835 the societies attempted to get control and insisted on establishing price lists by which their members could guide themselves. Thus in this year the cabinetmakers, stonecutters, cordwainers, saddlers, and harnessmakers [57] struck, all of whom were piece workers. But in 1836, when prices of food stuff had more than doubled over what they were in 1833,[58] those who worked by the day struck, with the avowed purpose of raising rather than regulating wages.

On February 25, "an overflow meeting of mechanics and labourers" was held to discuss higher wages. "It is evident to every intelligent person," it was declared, "that for several years past, such has been the enormous increase in the rent of houses, and the extraordinary rise in the price of all the necessaries of life, that it is morally impossible for any honest mechanic or labourer . . . to support himself and family creditably." It was agreed to insist upon such wages "as may hereafter be agreed to, by the different trades in their meetings." [59]

The house carpenters who had already announced that after a certain date they would not work unless they received 25 cents a day more than they had been receiving,[60] now became more resolute. When a number of master carpenters declared against granting the increase, the journeymen issued a statement that they would maintain their own prices "at all hazards." [61] About the same time the tin plate and sheet iron workers announced that they would demand higher wages, and gave notice that "on and after the 1st day of April next, twenty-five or fifty cents be added to each journeyman's wages." [62] The hand loom weavers, leather-dressers, cordwainers, shoe-

57 See Appendix II, below.

58 The price index on food stuffs was 113.5 in 1836, as compared to 86.0 in 1833. See above, chart, I, 11.

59 New York *Courier and Enquirer*, Feb. 29, 1836.

60 New York *Evening Post*, Feb. 23, 1836.

61 New York *Courier and Enquirer*, Mar. 9, 1836.

62 New York *Evening Post*, Mar. 4, 1836.

binders, coach makers, shipwrights, caulkers, masons, engineers and millwrights, varnishers and polishers followed with similar declarations.[63] Even the barbers advanced the price of shaving. "The Barbers have struck," commented the New York *Times*, "and now all that remains for Editors is to strike, too. Everybody has raised prices, and so must we . . . let us resolve hereafter to charge fifty per cent advance to all trades and professions who have raised their charges, if to no others." "Think of the boot-blacks," it added, "getting a hundred per cent advance." [64]

In most instances the employers allowed the increase as soon as it was demanded of them, in others after but a brief strike. Some trades, however, that gained an increase at this time, three months later demanded still another. Thus the carpenters, who, in March, increased their wages from $1.50 to $1.75 a day, in June demanded $2 a day. When some fifty employers met and resolved that they would not allow the increase, the carpenters passed counter resolutions declaring that since the "sum of two dollars per day is now barely sufficient as a remuneration for services of Journeymen House Carpenters," those employers who did not pay the wages asked for would bring upon themselves "the unpleasant consequences of a universal strike." [65] The employers were determined and a strike followed.[66]

In Philadelphia, in 1835, as we have seen, the strikes with few exceptions were for a shorter day. In 1836 they were uniformly for higher wages. Here as in New York the carpenters took the lead. Early in November, 1835, they announced that since the gradual increase of the "necessary expenses and expenditures is manifest from the constant rise in articles of consumption, especially articles of food," they would demand an increase of 25 cents on their daily wages during the summer months, and of 12½ cents during the winter months. They had been receiving $1.25 and $1.12½, respectively, during these periods. They set March 20 as the date for the new scale to go into effect.[67]

[63] See Appendix II. below.

[64] Reprinted in the Boston *Courier*, Apr. 26, 1836.

[65] *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, June 13 and 16, 1836.

[66] New York *Journal of Commerce*, reprinted in Boston *Courier*, June 22, 1836.

[67] *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 21, 1836.

About this time several other trades made their demands. The brass and iron finishers resolved "to form a Trade Society," and voted that each one of them "will not work for less than one dollar per week more" than they had been receiving.[68] The cordwainers working on ladies' shoes, who had gained an advance in wages in the preceding year, revised their bill of prices with an advance on former rates and voted to quit work on March 21, should the employers not grant the increase.[69] In April, the leather-dressers, coopers, and brewery workers declared for higher wages, in May, the day labourers, and in June and July, the paper makers, and black and white smiths.[70]

The most bitter of these wage strikes was that of the cordwainers. It started March 21, 1836, and on June 9, we learn that the employers were still holding out.[71]

Few of the details of this strike are known, but the facts we have concerning it show the determination with which it was fought on both sides. The journeymen, who had won an increase of 5 cents on a pair of shoes in the preceding year, now asked an additional 5¼ cents. This, it was figured out, allowing that each journeyman made twelve pairs of shoes a week, would net an increase of a little above 60 cents, bringing wages up to about $5.64 a week. The "most superficial observer," said a statement to the public, "will perceive that this increase in his weekly income can in no wise meet the enormous advance in the price of provisions, house rents and other necessaries." At $5.64 a week the annual income would amount to $293.28. "Now deducting 20 dollars which it must cost him for shoe-findings, tools and implements indispensable in the prosecution of his trade, deducting also what it will generally require for medical expenses, and the residue instead of being sufficient to procure for him and his family a moiety of life's necessaries and comforts, will render their circumstances as bare as the leafless trees of winter!" [72]

This started a strike which lasted at least three months. The employers charged that the strikers "have sent committees to unoffending men that have been at work, and have compelled them at their peril to leave off work,[73] and the journeymen

68 *Ibid.*, Mar. 5, 1836.
69 *Ibid.*, Mar. 28, and June 9, 1836.
70 See Appendix II, below.
71 *Pennsylvanian*, June 9, 1836.
72 *Ibid.*, Apr. 16, 1836.
73 *Public Ledger*, May 16, 1836.

charged that the employers were introducing "French and eastern shoes" into the Philadelphia market.[74] The journeymen, after they had been on strike for about three weeks, appointed a committee to make a list "of such employers' names as have given in to the bill of wages demanded" and "a similar list of all the employers who have refused to accede to our demands," in order that the public may distinguish them.[75]

The employers, however, had the upper hand. They combined with the shoe merchants, dry goods men, and leather dealers in an agreement not to deal with any employer who paid the wages the workingmen asked. In the second week in June we learn that while the journeymen still continued hostilities against their employers, they had gone into business for themselves — co-operation.[76]

Outside of New York and Philadelphia the demand was likewise for higher wages. In Newark 6 societies declared for higher wages, in Baltimore 5, and in Washington, 4.[77] In Boston there is no evidence of strikes that year. The failure of the ten-hour strikes in 1835 may have been a lesson against trying again for higher wages in 1836.

In the face of rising prices, the demand for higher wages came to be considered so much a matter of course that when employers attempted to reduce them they precipitated the most bitter strikes of the time. Such was the tailors' strike in New York City out of which the General Trades' Union itself emerged badly crippled.[78] Such also was the bookbinders' strike in Philadelphia, which won the support, not only of the Union of which the society was a member, but of the working population throughout the country.

One journeyman declared that the wages of journeymen bookbinders varied in the city and county of Philadelphia from 25 per cent to 50 per cent. To standardise them a bill of prices was adopted in October, 1835, and submitted to the employers, who subscribed thereto, as it was during the busy season of the year. After the new year, however, when dull times set in, the latter issued a bill of prices of their own, cutting the rates to what they had been before October. The journeymen would not

74 *Pennsylvanian*, May 8, 1836.
75 *Ibid.*, June 25, 1836.
76 See below, I, 466 *et seq.*
77 See Appendix II, below. Notice the strikes for higher wages in smaller towns.
78 See below, I, 408 *et seq.*

submit to the reduction and a strike followed.[79] The employers issued a list of the strikers for publication throughout the country,[80] advertised for bookbinders in other cities,[81] and agreed with booksellers that the latter should give no work "to any Master Binder who employed journeymen that belonged to the Trades' Unions," nor place work in any establishment where trade societies were allowed to operate.[82] The journeymen made known their grievances. The bookbinding business was peculiarly health wrecking, they said. Moreover, when a novel or other work of interest was about to be gotten out, the employer, in order to secure the work, "pledges himself to finish the job by a certain day, and the workman is told that so much work must be done (double perhaps what he is willing to undertake) but the new work must be finished — the public are anxiously waiting and to retain his situation he may have to labour like a horse at the expense of his bodily power." They declared that in spite of his exertions the average bookbinder earned about $7 a week. Some earned as high as $10.30, but only by working week in and week out "till twelve o'clock at night." The master bookbinders in reducing wages at this time were only attempting to break the trade societies and Union.[83]

When the news of difficulties reached other cities the trades' unionists took action to relieve "their brethren from the grip of the self-styled masters." In New York City, when a delegation of the strikers appeared, the Trades' Union passed resolutions "that the delegates of the different Trade Societies . . . be instructed to lay the subject before their respective Societies, and urge the necessity of supporting their fellow mechanics, who are at this inclement season driven to a stand for their rights against aristocratical tyranny."[84] In Washington the Union unanimously voted "that the unappropriated funds now in the Treasury be appropriated to aid the Bookbinders of Philadelphia."[85] In Albany[86] and Newark,[87] the trades' unions likewise voted support. Nor were the individual societies backward in their contributions. A count shows thirty-seven of them in Boston,

79 *Pennsylvanian*, Feb. 12, 1836.
80 *Ibid.*, Feb. 4, 1836.
81 *Ibid.*, Feb. 15, 1836.
82 *Ibid.*, Feb. 12, 1836.
83 *Ibid.*, Feb. 19, 1836.
84 *National Trades' Union*, Feb. 6, 1836.
85 *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 2, 1836.
86 *National Trades' Union*, Feb. 20, and Mar. 5, 1836.
87 *Ibid.*, Mar. 19, 1836.

New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington to have contributed varying sums of money.[88]

With such support the bookbinders were able to hold out. Indeed, the employers were the first to make overtures for a settlement. When the strike was about a month and a half old, they issued a statement declaring that the journeymen in their list of prices did not take into account "the responsibilities, cares, risks," of employers and would therefore not assent to it. This statement, however, they tempered with one declaring their willingness to meet the journeymen "by a conferring committee, or otherwise, for the amicable adjustment of the matters at issue between them." [89]

The journeymen appointed a committee but no agreement was reached. The strike lasted about six weeks longer and ended to the complete satisfaction of the strikers. Its success was no doubt due to the united support which it received. "Our long standout and its successful termination," read a letter addressed "To the Productive Classes of the United States," "can only be ascribed: First, to the justness of our cause; second, to the able support that we received from Trades' Unions, and our fellow workmen throughout the country, and lastly to our own firm determination never to surrender that right which is the right of every labourer, of setting our own price on our own labour. . . ." "Our cause," continued the letter, "was neither the cause of a faction, or a party, or an individual, but it was the sacred cause of every skilled labourer in the civilised world." [90]

EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATIONS AND CONSPIRACY CASES

The societies made their demands so rapidly, one after another, first for shorter hours and then for higher wages, that the employers finally organised in 1836 to crush them. As early as the spring of 1835, when labour first became aggressive, the New York *Journal of Commerce*,[91] speaking on behalf of employers, declared that "if the employed combine in this way, employers may be compelled to do the same in self-defence."

The records of the employers' associations are not as complete

88 *National Laborer*, Apr. 30, 1836.
89 *Ibid.*, Mar. 7, 1836.
90 *Ibid.*, Apr. 30, 1836.
91 Apr. 8, 1835.

as those of the workingmen's societies and unions. Most of the evidence concerning them came from the proceedings of the latter where they are mentioned only in connection with some difficulty. Nevertheless, there are indications that wherever workingmen organised and were aggressive the employers also organised. Even in the cities of the then Far West, Cincinnati, Louisville, and St. Louis, where we find active organisations of journeymen tailors, we also find organisations of master tailors.[92] In New York City, including some associations that appeared in 1834 and 1835, there were at least eight such associations in 1836. These were the associations of master hatters,[93] cabinetmakers,[94] tailors,[95] carpenters,[96] machinists,[97] and leather dealers,[98] "manufacturers and retailers of the ladies branch of Boot and Shoe business,"[1] and morocco manufacturers.[2] In Philadelphia, including those that organised in 1835, there were seven such associations in this year. These were the masters' associations of bricklayers,[3] bakers,[4] hand loom weavers,[5] bookbinders,[6] carpenters,[7] "employers engaged in the Ladies' branch of Boot and Shoe business,"[8] and printers.[9]

There had been masters' associations before this time. But these were not primarily employers' associations. They were manufacturers', merchants', and employers' associations all in one, regulating the quality of the goods they made, fixing prices, and dealing with journeymen as the occasion arose. But the associations that appeared now were primarily employers' associations organised for the expressed purpose of combating labour. They justified themselves on the ground that, owing to the frequent demands made of them, they were unable to carry on their business. Because of the "rapid succession" of

92 *Commercial Bulletin and Missouri Literary Register*, Dec. 9 and 18, 1835. See above, I, 352, 353.

93 *National Trades' Union*, Dec. 20, 1834; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 222.

94 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Apr. 11, 1835.

95 New York *Courier and Enquirer*, Mar. 9, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 318.

96 *Ibid.*, Mar. 9, 1836.

97 New York *Evening Post*, Mar. 17, 1836.

98 New York *Courier and Enquirer*, Mar. 26, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 309.

1 *Ibid.*, Apr. 11, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 311.

2 *Ibid.*, Apr. 25 and 30, 1836.

3 *Pennsylvanian*, June 6, 1835.

4 *Ibid.*, June 26, 1836.

5 *National Laborer*, July 2, 1836.

6 *Pennsylvanian*, Feb. 4, 1836.

7 *Ibid.*, Mar. 17, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 50.

8 *Ibid.*, Mar. 28, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 32.

9 *National Laborer*, May 28, 1836.

strikes, declared "the employers on the Ladies' Branch of Boot and Shoemaking Business," of Philadelphia, we are unable "to determine upon any fixed price or value of our goods." "We cannot," they said, "take orders from our customers as heretofore, not knowing how soon we may be called upon to accede to a new list of wages, or other measures equally detrimental." A measure specifically mentioned was the one regulating apprentices. "It is also an article of their by-laws," they said, "that no Journeyman is permitted to instruct an apprentice belonging to an Employer, until after he enters in the last six months of his time, under a penalty of twenty dollars." Finally they declared that they were unwilling "to submit to such a state of things, fostering oppression, tyranny and misrule, and thus obstructing the free course of trade." [10]

The blacklist was the chief weapon of the employers. The master tailors in New York organised and declared that they would "not receive into their employ any man who is a member of the 'Union Trade Society of Journeymen Tailors in the city of New York.'" [11] The employing curriers and leather dealers of the same city resolved to protect themselves "against the destructive influence of the Trades' Union Society," and declared that they would "not employ any man who is known to be a member of that or any other society which has for its object the dictation of terms or prices for which workmen shall engage themselves." [12]

Individual associations, however, were not strong enough to make headway against the journeymen who were organised in strong central unions. To meet them on their own ground, they, too, at least attempted to organise themselves in central bodies. In Philadelphia the master carpenters took the initiative in March, 1836. The journeymen announced that after a certain day they would not work unless they should receive 25 cents a day more than they had been receiving, and the masters, determined to strike at the root of the evil, met and declared that they would form an "Association for the purpose of putting down the combination called the Trades' Union," which instig-

10 *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 28, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 33, 34.

11 New York *Courier and Enquirer*, Mar. 9, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 315.

12 New York *Courier and Enquirer*, Mar. 26, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 309.

ated strikes. A preamble and resolutions were adopted and ordered published. The preamble described the character of the Union. It was composed of mechanics in every branch; each member paid weekly or monthly dues; when some trade had a complaint it was settled in the Union, and if the employers did not accede they were confronted with a strike. During the strike the journeymen were supported by the Union while the employers were forced to break their contracts. The resolutions called upon master mechanics "to attend a meeting, for the purpose of forming an association to be called the Anti-trades' Union Association." [13]

Some employers, as those engaged in the "Ladies' branch of Boot and Shoe business," responded by appointing a similar committee.[14] It is not certain, however, whether a central body of employers' associations was ever formed. It is probable that the associations acted together but were never formally organised.

In New York City a similar attempt was made, but here too there is no evidence that a central body was created. In the spring of 1836, when the journeymen cordwainers working on ladies' shoes were demanding higher wages, the employers declared that they "would not recognise the right of workmen to levy a list of wages . . . for the support of the fund of the Trades' Union, or to the fund of any individual trade society," and called "upon the different societies of employers to appoint delegates to hold a general convention." [15]

The most effective weapon, however, the employers found in the courts. The trade societies in requesting wages and other conditions of employment insisted on the closed shop. In some instances they fined members for hiring non-members and in others they fined employers for hiring non-members. The constitution of the Boston Cordwainers' Society provided that any journeyman working in the city who was not a member or did not become a member within two meetings after being notified should "pay a fine of two dollars." [16] The Hudson shoemakers

13 *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 17, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 54.

14 *Ibid.*, Mar. 28, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 32.

15 New York *Courier and Enquirer*, Apr. 11, 1836; *Doc Hist.*, V, 311.

16 Commonwealth *v.* Hunt, *Thatcher's Criminal Cases*, 609, 611, 612 (1840).

fined an employer for hiring non-society members and paying below the price.[17]

The Beneficial Society of Journeymen Bricklayers of Baltimore issued an invitation to all journeymen bricklayers "to send in their names" for membership. "It is our wish," it declared, "to let the journeymen know that we cannot work on a building with them, if they are not members of this society." To this statement was appended an article of the constitution: "Any Journeyman shall be considered unfair who is not a member of this Society," and any building "shall be considered foul on which an unfair man is at work, and any members of this Society working thereon, after being made acquainted with the same, shall be fined ten dollars. Any person incurring the fine in this article shall pay the same, with his arrearages, before he can work on a fair building, or draw benefits from the Society." [18]

It was at this point that the employers levelled their attack in the courts, alleging that, in prescribing with whom they would or would not work, the societies constituted conspiracies. From 1829 to 1842 there were eight such prosecutions. These cases were those of the Baltimore weavers [19] and Chambersburg shoemakers in 1829,[20] the Thompsonville carpet weavers in 1834–1836,[21] the Geneva shoemakers in 1835,[22] the New York tailors,[23] the Hudson shoemakers, [24] and the Philadelphia plasterers in 1836,[25] and of the Boston cordwainers (Commonwealth *v.* Hunt) in 1840–1842.[26] The indicted workingmen were convicted in the Chambersburg shoemakers' case and in the New York tailors' case. In the Baltimore weavers' case and in Commonwealth *v.* Hunt the courts sustained demurrers to the indictments. The defendants were acquitted after jury trials in the Thompsonville carpet-weavers' case, the Hudson shoemakers' case and the Philadelphia plasterers' case. The Geneva shoemakers' case went to the highest court of the State.

17 People *v.* Cooper, in *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 277–314.
18 Baltimore *Republican and Commercial Advertiser*, Feb. 24, 1836.
19 *Doct. Hist.*, IV, 313, 314.
20 *Ibid.*, 273.
21 *Ibid.*, Supplement, see above, I, 313.
22 People *v.* Fisher *et al*, 14 Wendell 10 (1835).
23 *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 315–333.
24 *Ibid.*, 277–312.
25 *Ibid.*, 335–341.
26 Metcalf 111 (1842)

Three of these cases, those of the Geneva shoemakers, the New York tailors, and the Hudson shoemakers, arose in New York, where conspiracy had recently been made a statutory offence.[27] There had been on the statute books of New York a law against champerty which declared all persons conspirators who confederated by oath or otherwise, falsely and maliciously to indict another person. But in the codification of the law in 1829, the clause "to commit any act injurious to public morals or to trade or commerce" was added.[28] This clause was taken from the definition of conspiracy in the common law, and was not directed against organisations of wage-earners. By interpretation, however, it became the first positive statute in this country against organisations of labour.

The case which made this interpretation a precedent was that of the boot and shoemakers of Geneva in 1835. Here the journeymen had organised themselves into a society, adopted a bill of prices, and agreed among themselves not to work for less, nor to work with any one in the same shop who did. It happened that one Pennock did work for less. The society fined him $10. But as he refused to pay the fine and still continued to work below price, the journeymen struck against the master who employed him. The master discharged Pennock, but at the same time had the journeymen indicted for combining "to *prevent* any journeymen boot and shoemaker, in the village of Geneva from working in his trade and occupation *below certain rates and prices prescribed by the defendants* and their confederates, to the great injury of the trade of the state of New York"; and also, in forcing the discharge of Pennock, for obstructing "free and voluntary labour in the business of boot and shoe making, to the injury of trade" in the state of New York.[29]

This case originated in a lower court and was carried to the Supreme Court of the State [30] on a writ of error. The Supreme Court held that what the workingmen had done was in violation of the conspiracy statute, inasmuch as it was "injurious to trade

27 The following analysis of legal issues has been made by E. E. Witte, in connection with the preparation of his book on *Courts in Labor Disputes*, and his contribution on "The Law of Conspiracy," chap. iii, in Commons and Andrews, *Principles of Labor Legislation*.

28 New York, *Revised Statutes*, 1829, II, 691, Sec. 8.

29 People *v.* Fisher, 14 Wendell 10 (1835).

30 In 1835 the Supreme Court of New York occupied the same position as the Court of Appeals now occupies.

or commerce." Chief Justice Savage who wrote the decision, developed this proposition at length. "If journeymen boot makers by extravagant demands for wages," he said, "so enhance the price of boots made in *Geneva,* for instance, that boots made elsewhere, in *Auburn,* for example can be sold cheaper, is not such an act injurious to trade? It is surely so to the trade of Geneva in that particular article, and that I apprehend is all that is necessary to bring the offence within the statute." Again an individual might say at what price he would work, but he had no right to say that every one else should work at the same price. If one individual did not possess such a right, a number of individuals could not possess it. "In the present case," Judge Savage said, "an industrious man was driven out of employment by the unlawful measures pursued by the defendants, and an injury done to the community, by diminishing the quantity of productive labour, and of internal trade."

The defendants in this case, as has been noted, however, were indicted not for combining to increase their wages, but because they tried to prevent other journeymen from working for less, and in particular because they procured the discharge of Pennock through a strike against his employer. There are statements in the decision of Judge Savage which indicate that the court appreciated this fact. For instance, the court said: "If the defendants cannot make coarse boots for less than one dollar per pair, let them refuse to do so; but let them not directly or indirectly undertake to say that others shall not do the work for a less price."

While all that was said in this decision about the illegality of combining to raise wages may be regarded as *obiter dicta,* it certainly made it difficult to say what organised labour according to this decision could lawfully do. In unmistakeable terms the highest court of New York had condemned combinations to raise wages.

The workingmen became alarmed. The employers, however, turned to the decision as a precedent and henceforth, in prosecuting the societies, prosecuted them as combinations injurious to trade. Even in Philadelphia where only the common law prevailed, the recorder, in instructing the grand jury in the plasterers' case, declared that conspiracies "against the public

are, among others, such as endanger public health, violate public morals, insult public justice, destroy public peace, or affect public trade or business," and that he would confine himself " to the consideration of the latter." [31]

The case which followed the Geneva shoemakers' case and which attracted much attention was that of the New York tailors in 1836.[32] In October, 1835, the Union Trade Society of Journeymen Tailors revised its bill of prices with an increase on former rates. The demand was made in the busy season of the clothing industry and the employers granted the increase after a brief strike. In the following January, however, they organised and submitted a bill of their own reducing the prices to what they had been previous to the increase granted.[33] The journeymen rejected the offer and a strike followed. The employers blacklisted the journeymen and the journeymen picketted the employers' shops. The men " paraded before the doors and windows from early in the morning to about nine o'clock at night, often spreading their cloaks and coats before the windows to darken them, insulting, villifying, and applying the most opprobrious epithets to the journeymen who continued in their employ; dignifying them with the name ' dungs,' following and intercepting their movements when they went away with jobs and threatening them with violence unless they struck, quit work and joined them.[34] This they continued for about three months, when a reprint of the decision rendered in the Geneva shoemakers' case appeared in the daily papers. The Trades' Union appointed a committee to ascertain whether the judge had rendered the decision " in his capacity as Judge or as a feed counsellor." [35] But the employers turned to the decision as a precedent and secured the arrest of twenty of the tailors, including the officers, for conspiracy.

The committee appointed by the Union condemned the decision in the Geneva case. The shoemakers might as well have been found guilty of conspiring against public health as against trade, for by raising the price of shoes, the people would have to go barefoot. This would subject them " to colds, coughs, and

31 *Public Ledger*, June 27, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 336.

32 People *v.* Faulkner, in *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 315–335.

33 *Ibid.*

34 New York *Courier and Enquirer*, May 31, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 315.

35 *National Trades' Union*, Mar. 12, 1836.

their attendant concomitants, fevers, consumption, rheumatism, etc." [36] But if the decision was a just one, it ought to work both ways. The journeymen tailors were a combination to raise wages, the master tailors were a combination to reduce them. Accordingly the journeymen drew a bill of charges against the employers and presented it to a grand jury. The grand jury, however, "as was expected" said the journeymen, ignored the bill.

The trial finally took place. The court followed the decision of the shoemakers' case and found the journeymen guilty. "Judge Edwards," said the New York *Transcript*,[37] "charged the jury in very strong terms, decidedly against *Trades' Unions*, stigmatising them as illegal combinations." He dwelt particularly "upon the 'legality and justice'" of Judge Savage's decision in the shoemakers' case.

The protest previously raised by the workingmen was mild compared with the storm that broke out now. As the men were not sentenced until a week later, a circular bearing the imprint of a coffin was circulated throughout the city, calling upon workingmen to attend court on the day of sentence. "On Monday, June 6, 1836," the circular read, "these Freemen are to receive their sentence, to gratify the hellish appetites of the Aristocracy. On Monday, the Liberty of the Workingmen will be interred! Judge Edwards is to chant the Requiem! Go! Go! Go! every Freeman, every Workingman, and hear the melancholy sound of the earth on the Coffin of Equality! Let the court-room, the City-hall — yea, the whole Park, be filled with Mourners!" "But remember," continued the circular, "offer no violence to Judge Edwards! Bend meekly, and receive the chains wherewith you are to be bound! Keep the peace! Above all things keep the peace! . . ." [38]

On the given date "a large number of persons" filled the court-room. "There appeared to be no peculiar excitement, however," said the New York *Evening Post*.[39] The judge again laid down the ruling of the higher court and imposed sentence. The president of the society was fined $150, "one who made

[36] *National Laborer*, Apr. 9, 1836.

[37] Reprinted in *Public Ledger*, June 2, 1836.

[38] *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, June 8, 1836, quoted from the *Commercial Advertiser*, June 7, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 317.

[39] June 13, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 325.

himself particularly conspicuous," $100, the others, $50 each. The judge emphasised the sentence by pointing out that "in this favoured land of law and liberty, the road to advancement is open to all, and the journeymen may by their skill and industry, and moral worth, soon become flourishing master mechanics"; that combinations would eventually prove injurious to the journeymen themselves, and finally that they were of foreign origin "and are mainly upheld by foreigners." As soon as the penalties were fixed, they were paid and the tailors were discharged.[40]

The daily papers reported the trial and took sides on the issues involved. The New York *Journal of Commerce*[41] voiced the sentiments of the court and pointed out that societies injured trade and commerce, that they were unnecessary in this country, that they were made up of foreigners. The New York *Evening Post*,[42] in sympathy with the workmen, declared that "men must shut their eyes to events passing around them if they think it is a few foreigners or only foreigners that comprise our Trades' Union. It is a low calculation when we estimate that two-thirds of the workingmen in this city, numbering several thousand persons, belong to it." The New York *Union*, the official organ of the Trades' Union, saw nothing but tyranny in this decision. "If an American judge will tell an American jury that these barriers which the poor have thrown up to protect themselves from the gnawing avarice of the rich, are unlawful, then are the mechanics justified the same as our Fathers were justified in the days of the revolution in 'Arming for Self Defence!'"[43]

It was at this point that the workingmen turned to politics. If only right laws could be passed and interpreted correctly labour would have a free hand. As it was, the legislators and judges were men "whose situation in life" would "not admit of sympathising" with the working people. The only alternative was to elect "such men as have shown by their acts that they have some sympathy for the rights and happiness of their more humble and oppressed fellow citizens."

These were the opinions expressed at an open air meeting held

40 New York *Evening Post*, June 13, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 325, 330, 332.
41 May 31, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 319.
42 June 13, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 332.
43 Quoted in the *National Laborer*, June 4, 1836.

in the park fronting the City Hall on Monday evening, June 13. Here it was claimed, some 27,000 persons, "chiefly radicals," had gathered.[44] Robert Townsend, Jr., a carpenter, was elected president. Speeches were delivered, Judge Savage, of the shoemakers' case, and Judge Edwards, of the tailors' case, were both burned in effigy, and resolutions were adopted "that a Convention be held at Utica, on the 15th day of September next, to take into consideration the propriety of forming a separate and distinct party, around which the labouring classes and their friends, can rally with confidence." A corresponding committee was appointed to advise with "fellow mechanics" in the different counties.[45]

So loud, indeed, was the cry that justice had been thwarted, that juries were doubtless influenced by it. Two cases came up soon after the tailors' case, that of the Hudson shoemakers at the end of June, and of the Philadelphia plasterers in the middle of July, but in both the juries found a verdict of not guilty. Of all journeymen indicted during this period the Hudson shoemakers were the most audacious in enforcing the closed shop. They not only refused to work for employers who hired non-society men, but also fined them, and yet they were acquitted.

The further effect of the protests of 1836 may possibly be traced in the famous case of Commonwealth *v.* Hunt, decided six years later by the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts in an opinion written by one of the greatest of American jurists, Chief Justice Shaw. This case arose in 1840 and involved a union of shoemakers in an indictment similar to the indictments in previous cases. The lower court decided against the Union.[46] But in an appeal to the Supreme Judicial Court, Chief Justice Shaw reversed the decision.

This decision [47] is notable in that it holds trade unions to be legal organisations. In the earlier cases it was never in so many words held that trade unions were unlawful, but in all of them there were suggestions to this effect. Now it was recog-

44 New York *Evening Post*, June 14, 1836; New York *Journal of Commerce*, June 18, 1836.

45 *National Laborer*, June 18, 1836, quoted from the New York *Union; Doc. Hist.*, V, 322.

46 Commonwealth *v.* Hunt, *Thatcher's Criminal Cases*, 609 (1840).

47 Commonwealth *v.* Hunt, 4 Metcalf 111 (1842).

nised that trade unions were *per se* lawful organisations; and though men might band themselves together to effect a criminal object under the disguise of a trade union, such a purpose was not to be assumed without positive evidence. On the contrary, the court said that "when an association is formed for purposes actually innocent, and afterwards its powers are abused, by those who have the control and management of it, to purposes of oppression and injustice, it will be criminal in those who misuse it, or give consent thereto, but not in other members of the association." This doctrine that workingmen may lawfully organise trade unions, has since Commonwealth *v.* Hunt been accepted in very nearly every case.

The other doctrine which Judge Shaw advanced in this case, has been less generally accepted. It was that the members of a union may procure the discharge of non-members, through strikes for this purpose against their employers. This is the essence of the closed-shop question; and Commonwealth *v.* Hunt goes the full length of regarding strikes for the closed shop as legal. Judge Shaw said that there is nothing unlawful about such strikes, if they are conducted in a peaceable manner.

IMMIGRANTS AND RIOTS

With some exceptions [48] organised labour conducted itself peacefully. Serious outbreaks, however, did occur among the unorganised, especially common labourers working on railroads, canals, and docks. Most of these were foreigners, poor and ignorant, who, in redressing their grievances, broke into violence. Following three riots perpetrated by Irish labourers within two days, one near Albany, one in Detroit, and one in Boston, the New York *Journal of Commerce* [49] called attention to the fact that riots "are an exotic" phenomenon in this country, "which has been imported along with the dregs and scum of the old world that we so much covet."

Immigration into this country, of course, was not unknown prior to this time, but it did not become perceptible until now.

[48] The printers of Washington, during a strike in Duff Green's plant in 1835, engaged in street fights on three successive days with the men who took their places. At one time Green's men took refuge in his house and fired two pistol shots. New York *Journal of Commerce*, June 5, 1835.

[49] July 18, 1835.

In 1832 the first noticeable increase occurred. During the fifteen-month period beginning October 1, 1831, and ending December 31, 1832, the newcomers increased in number to 60,482, as compared to 22,633 during the twelve month period ending September 1, 1831, and remained about on the same level until after the panic of 1837 when their number fell off to 38,914 in 1838. During the entire decade the number practically quadrupled over that of the preceding ten years, 128,502 having arrived from 1820 to 1829, and 538,381 from 1830 to 1839.[50] In these numbers most European countries were represented, but Ireland outnumbered all others, with Germany a close second.[51]

The opportunities offered in these early years no doubt attracted many Europeans, but a large number of them also came because they were subsidised. The internal improvements that were projected at this time required hundreds of unskilled labourers. To secure them agents were sent to England. Several hundred were brought over in this way in 1829 by the builders of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. No sooner did they land than many of them deserted and the agent went again to Liverpool in search of others.[52]

In some instances the aid came from the other side. Authorities of poor and correction houses in Europe, in order to get rid of troublesome and indigent characters, paid their passage to America. Indeed, so loud became the complaint that Europe was " disgorging its moral dregs and filth upon the shores of the United States " that Congress took cognisance of it. The Senate asked the Secretary of the Treasury to circularise the American consuls abroad with letters of inquiry as to what the situation really was. The consuls at Cove of Cork and Waterford were refused information. Those at Dublin and Londonderry reported that most of the assisted emigrants went to the British Colonies in North America. The consuls at Rotterdam, Hamburg, Glasgow, and Belfast reported that to their knowledge no assistance was given to emigrants leaving these respective places. On the other hand the consul at Liverpool wrote that " it has been the practice with many par-

50 *Reports of the Immigration Commission, Senate Document*, 61 Cong., 3 Sess., No. 756, XX, 4, I, 57.

51 *Ibid.*, 66–72.

52 McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, VI, 81.

ishes, for some years past, to send abroad such of their superabundant population as would consent to go, and although there has never been a restriction as to the place, they have invariably preferred the United States, and ninety out of a hundred, New York. Regular contracts are made by the different parishes with passenger-brokers at this place to ship them." In 1830, he said, 16,000 left that port for the United States, and, of these, 600 were sent by parishes. The consul at Leeds also reported that parishes paid the passage of paupers to America, and the one at Hesse Cassel answered that the German governments forbade the deportation of paupers, but stated that it had come to his knowledge that Hamburg deported from time to time criminals who had been condemned for life or a long term. They were given a choice to serve or to emigrate. A number of them had been sent to New York and to Brazil.[53]

The German immigrants moved westward and were hardly noticed. The Irish, however, congregated in the larger cities. They were ignorant, poor, and held to the Roman Catholic faith. The feeling against Catholics in this country had always been unfriendly and now, with the swelling tide of immigration, it became openly hostile. In 1834 the Ursuline Convent at Charlestown was burned,[54] and in 1835 in New York a riot took place "between some of our native born citizens," wrote a sympathetic newspaper,[55] "and those too much persecuted people, both at home and abroad — the Irish." The mayor with several aldermen and the police, it added, "were promptly on the spot, and a number of individuals were promptly arrested." In Boston, in 1837, an engine company returning from a fire turned into an Irish funeral procession. A riot followed in which 15,000 persons participated and which has become known in Boston annals as "the Broad Street riot." The Irish quarter was sacked and many persons wounded. Only the intervention of the mayor at the head of a military company terminated the riot.[56] Indeed, it is at

53 *Senate Document*, 24th Cong., 2d sess., No. 5, p. 11.

54 *Report of the Immigration Commission, Senate Document*, 61 Cong., 3 sess., No. 758, XXXIX, 9.

55 *The Man*, June 23, 1835.

56 Winsor, *Memorial History of Boston*, III, 245; Desmond, *The Know-Nothing Party*, 25.

this time that we discern the beginnings of a native American movement which fifteen years later culminated in the "Know-Nothings.[57]

The more serious outbreaks occurred among the Irish as wage-earners. Large numbers of them worked in construction gangs on canals and railroads, where they experienced no small amount of suffering from low wages and unemployment. According to a letter to Mathew Carey, from the former secretary of the board of canal commissioners of Pennsylvania, the wages of labourers on canals and turnpikes in 1831, were, on an average, from $10 to $12 per month "and found." When labourers were scarce, as high as $15 to $20 per month might be paid, he said, but in the winter season, on the other hand, men could be had for $5 per month and he had known of cases, he added, in which men had worked a whole winter for board alone.[58] Taking the case of a man who received $10 for ten months and $5 for two, and who had a wife and two children, Mathew Carey estimated that, if the wife earned 50 cents per week or $26 per year, at the lowest possible rates of expenditure, counting only 8 cents per day each for food for the wife and children, the family would have an annual deficit of $30.21. For shoes and clothes for the entire family only $40 was allowed, but apparently less than $10 could be expended. Moreover, no allowance was made for sickness, unemployment, or extra expenses arising from sickness or any other cause. Even if the man earned $12 for ten months and $5 for two, his income fell about $10 short of his expenses. Mathew Carey estimated, however, that about 50 per cent. of all the men employed on canals returned to their families in the winter with constitutions broken by fever and ague.[59]

The city labourer, whose wages averaged about 75 cents per day throughout the year, when employed, was, according to Mathew Carey's calculations, little better off than the canal labourer. If he lost only eight weeks in the year by sickness and unemployment and if his wife did not work for pay, he would have, at the same rate of expediture for a family of four

57 *Report of the Immigration Commission*, XXXIX, 9–12.

58 Carey, *Appeal to the Wealthy*, 3rd ed., 8–10.

59 *Ibid.*

as in the case of the canal labourer, less than $4 a year for incidental expenses. His calculation was as follows:[60]

44 weeks, at $4.50		$198.00
Shoes and clothing for self and wife	$ 24.00	
For two children at $8 each	16.00	
Rent, 50 cents per week	26.00	
Soap, candles, etc., at 8 cents per week	4.16	
Fuel, at 15 cents per week	7.80	
Bread, meat, drink, vegetables, etc., for self, wife and two children, at 8 cents each per day	116.68	
		$194.64

Outbreaks were frequent among the immigrants and unskilled, but of the so-called "riots" of this time probably two-thirds were unorganised strikes. A serious riot among the stevedores and riggers of New York in 1828, for example, was caused by unemployment and a reduction in wages which had resulted in a strike of 200 or 300 of these workmen.[61] The next year, labourers on the Pennsylvania canal, who had been unemployed for a considerable time owing to the severity of the winter and had become indebted to storekeepers and others for their subsistence, refused to go to work unless their wages were raised from 80 cents to $1 per day until they would get out of debt. It was said that they prevented, by threats or by actual violence, those who were disposed to go to work from doing so, but were finally quelled by a sheriff and posse.[62]

In August, 1829, such a riot occurred on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, in which one man was killed and several wounded, a home destroyed, and the railroad tracks torn up. It was not suppressed until the militia arrived. Another "riot" on the same road occurred because a contractor absconded with the money which he had received from the company for the payment of wages. The company made an effort to settle for a small part of the amount due, whereupon the men began to tear up tracks and destroy rails.[63] Four years later a contractor who built a portion of the railroad absconded, and the labourers "in a fit of passion resorted to rioting; perhaps

60 *Ibid.*, 17.

61 *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, July 17, 1828; New York *Evening Post*, July 14, 1828.

62 *Ibid.*, Apr. 8 and 11, 1829.

63 *Ibid.*, July 4, 1831.

to the destroying the work that had been effected by their unrewarded hands." [64] In April, 1834, the workmen on the Boston and Providence Railroad quit work in a "riot" to get higher wages. The aid of a rifle corps was secured which dispersed the crowd and made several arrests. "Such riots" commented the Boston *Courier,* "are uncommon in this part of the country. . . . It is a wonder that no lives are lost," and then went on to say that "most, if not all of those engaged in the riot were foreigners." [65] In the fall of the same year 300 Irish labourers were said to have murdered several contractors of the Washington Railroad.[66] On the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal 1,000 labourers quit work in February, 1835. They themselves would not work and would not let others work until a company of rifle men was ordered from Williamsport.[67]

In the cities the labour riots were confined almost altogether to dock hands. The Philadelphia coal-heavers, working on the Schuylkill docks, during their strike in 1835 forced a complete suspension of work. "Three hundred of them," said the Boston *Courier,* "headed by a man armed with a sword, paraded along the canal, threatening death to those who unload or transfer the cargoes to the 75 vessels waiting in the river." [68] This strike started the ten-hour movement in Philadelphia. Another strike by coal-heavers in Philadelphia, which was marked by violence, occurred during the summer of 1836, and the arrest and conviction of the rioters caused a political flurry, in which the Union took the lead.[69]

In New York City in 1836, ship labourers, riggers, and stevedores struck for higher wages, and in an attempt to force others to quit work, the police interfered. A riot followed. "The New York Police," said the *Pennsylvanian,*[70] "attempted in an official manner to arrest the foolish men, and in the row that would naturally follow such impudent conduct they received some severe and probably dangerous wounds. The alarm was thereupon given, and the whole constabulary force rushed to the scene of action and arrested some half dozen foolish and hot headed foreigners."

64 *Radical Reformer and Working Man's Advocate,* Aug. 29, 1835.
65 May 2, 1834.
66 Scharf, *Chronicles of Baltimore,* 471.
67 Boston *Courier,* Feb. 21, 1835.
68 June 4, 1835; see above, I, 390.
69 See above, I, 377, 378.
70 Mar. 2, 1836.

COTTON FACTORY STRIKES, 1828–1836

Even the cotton factory operatives, consisting chiefly of women and children, were stirred with a desire to improve their conditions at this time. They were particularly active in the Middle Atlantic States. Here the Fall River Type of factory prevailed, mules instead of frames being used, which, unlike the frames were operated by men. The men added vigour and persistence to the strikes and were responsible for the effort in Pennsylvania, although a feeble one, to bring the operatives together into a State federation. In 1833, some nine villages "chiefly manufacturing districts" in the vicinity of Philadelphia, organised, as seen above, "The Trades' Union of Pennsylvania."[71]

But the movement among factory workers really dates from the summer of 1828, the first recorded strike of factory operatives having occurred at Paterson, New Jersey, in 1828. It was caused, apparently, by a change in the dinner hour from twelve to one, but finally led to a general demand for a ten-hour day.[72] The first recorded calling out of militia to quell labour disturbances appears to have occurred during this Paterson strike.[73] The strikers were, of course, defeated, but soon afterwards the twelve o'clock dinner hour was again established.

Another early strike occurred in the autumn of 1828 in Philadelphia and vicinity. The spinners "for several miles around the city" went on strike, apparently against a reduction in wages, which, as originally proposed, was 25 per cent., but was later made 10 per cent. Even at the old prices, it was said, a spinner could make only "from $7.50 to $8.50 per week for himself by working the full period of twelve hours daily, and in doing this he actually earned for his employers, from 40 to 50 dollars per week." In Manayunk three of the striking spinners were bound over to keep the peace in the Philadelphia county court because it was alleged they had threatened strike-breakers.[74] In Norristown, a spinner who

71 See above, I, 374, 375.

72 *Mechanics' Free Press*, Aug. 2, 1828; New York *Evening Post*, July 29, Aug. 1, 5, and 8, 1828.

73 Philadelphia *National Gazette*, July 28, 1828.

74 *Hazard's Register of Pennsylvania*, Jan. 17, 1829; *Doc. Hist.*, IV, 265–268.

persisted in working after the others had gone out was so annoyed by the children of the factory, that he finally entered suit against them on the ground of assault. The employers claimed that the spinners "hissed the children on," but the *Mechanics' Free Press,* sympathising with the strikers, sarcastically remarked that "surely the mouths of babes and sucklings shall proclaim the praises of such a generation, so greedy of gain, and so ready to devour the poor." [75] The outcome of this suit against the children is not known. Later in December, when the spinners had been out about three months, a meeting of the United Beneficial Society of Journeymen Cordwainers was held "to make a collection and to take such other measures as may be deemed necessary for the relief and assistance of our brother operatives, the cotton spinners." [76] Meetings of other trades to take up collections of 25 cents from each member were also proposed.[77] Nevertheless, the strike appears ultimately to have been lost.

Shortly afterwards another strike occurred in Baltimore, also against a reduction in wages. One master weaver, unlike others in the trade, paid his men in cash, but in doing so paid less than those who paid only part in cash. When, therefore, he proposed to reduce wages still lower, the journeymen struck. A meeting of journeymen and masters was held to urge the recalcitrant master to restore the old wages. But as he refused the men entered into "a solemn resolve" not to work for him again. To retaliate the master had thirteen of them indicted for conspiracy. The master weavers called in to testify, however, testified against him. They were opposed to a reduction of wages as it would produce a depression in the industry. The men were acquitted.[78]

From 1829 to 1833 no strikes have been found recorded in the Middle Atlantic States. From 1834 to 1836, however, four strikes have been found in Pennsylvania, and one in New Jersey. Those in Pennsylvania were at Manayunk and Blockley [79] in 1834, and at Chester Creek,[80] and Norristown [81] in

75 *Mechanics' Free Press,* Nov. 15, 1828.
76 *Ibid.,* Dec. 20, 1828.
77 *Ibid.,* Dec. 23, 1828.
78 *Banner of the Constitution,* Dec. 5, 1829; *Doc. Hist.,* IV, 269–272.
79 *The Man,* Apr. 15, 1834.
80 Boston *Courier,* Mar. 18, 1836.
81 *National Laborer,* Sept. 24, Oct. 22, Nov. 12, 1836.

1836. The one in New Jersey occurred in Paterson in 1835.[82]

Of the Pennsylvania strikes the one at Manayunk is the most notable. Early in March the Schuylkill company gave notice that it would close its doors on March 22. This was during the depression of 1834. But a few days later it announced that it would continue if the operatives accepted a reduction of 25 per cent. The whole force quit work.[83] A committee consisting of three men and two women was appointed to manage the strike and solicit aid for the "widows and orphans, who have been unable to save anything from their miserable earnings, and are now destitute of the means of subsistence."[84] A picket force was organised to prevent any one from taking work below price. After the strike had been on for several weeks the company offered to "run the machinery" if the operatives would accept a reduction of 15 per cent. This was again rejected.[85] The Company now brought in families from elsewhere to take the strikers' places, and with them "an armed peace officer, apparently called for the purpose of protecting a few children to and from work." This broke the strike, for at "a public meeting of working people, formerly in the employ of the Schuylkill Factory Company" held soon after, resolutions were adopted urging the strikers "to use every exertion on their part, immediately to procure such work elsewhere as will suit each one of them individually."[86]

These were defensive strikes against reduction in wages; the strike in Paterson, New Jersey, however, was offensive. Here as in most factories in the Middle Atlantic States the number of hours worked in a day was thirteen and a half. In July, 1835, the operatives demanded that they be reduced to eleven. In their demands they also registered complaint against the store-order system, holding back one entire weeks' pay when settlement was demanded, and excessive fines.[87]

In preparation for the strike the operatives organised themselves into the "Paterson Association for the Protection of the Labouring Classes, operatives of cotton mills, etc." They ap-

82 See below, I, 421.
83 *The Man*, Apr. 22, 1834.
84 *Ibid.*, Apr. 15, 1834.
85 *Ibid.*, Apr. 22, 1834.
86 *Pennsylvanian*, May 9, 1834.
87 *Radical Reformer and Working Man's Advocate*, Sept. 19, 1835.

pointed a committee to interview the employers, but it was refused a hearing. They thereupon called a strike which involved 20 mills and 2,000 persons, and appointed a "vigilance committee" to handle it. The committee corresponded with central labour organisations of the different cities and elicited considerable sympathy and some aid. The workingmen of Newark alone sent $203 to the strikers.[88] In New York at a public meeting held at Tammany Hall, a committee of three was appointed for each ward in the city "to raise funds and take such other measures as they may deem expedient to sustain the operatives at Paterson." [89]

Encouraged and aided, the operatives stood firm. On August 8, we learn from the Paterson *Courier,* "the organ of the factory lords," that the town was in continued commotion on the subject of reduction of the time of labour. According to the *National Trades' Union* the employers seemed determined to "starve the women and children into submission, while they are resolute in standing out, and have nailed the flag to the mast." Many of them, it said, were obtaining other employment and some were leaving town, and it was likely that one-half of the employers could not get hands even were they now to accede. "We fear," it added, "this state of things will encourage the workingmen to superadd to their present demands an advance of wages." [90]

About two weeks later, however, we learn of a reversal. Two-thirds of the hands returned to work on factory time, not at thirteen and a half hours a day as before, but at twelve hours for five days in the week and nine hours on Saturday.[91] The employers yielded to a reduction of one and a half hours per day, and, in doing so, broke the strike. Some still continued to hold out for an eleven-hour day. But so far as the strike was concerned, it was practically over. Those that did not return to work were blacklisted, especially the children of the leaders. As late as September 15, three weeks after the others had returned to work, we learn that "the bosses still persevere in their proscriptive course against the children belonging to the

88 Luther, *Address to the Working Men of New England,* 42–46.

89 *National Trades' Union,* Aug. 22, 1835.

90 Copied from the *National Trades' Union,* Aug. 8, 1835.

91 New York *Working Man's Advocate,* Aug. 29, 1835.

officers of the Association, and a few others who dared to advocate the reduction of factory hours of labour. This course is adopted no doubt as being the most efficacious of any other for driving them from town; probably dreaming that their absence would settle the business." [92]

In the New England States at least six strikes have been counted from 1828 to 1836. Here the Lowell type of factory prevailed; frames instead of mules being used that were operated by women. As the women came from the farms, the factory owners provided board and lodging. They thus at least got living expenses, a thing which was not always the case in the Middle Atlantic States where men, women, and children, indeed, whole families, were employed, who kept house for themselves. Comparison of weekly wages in the two sections in 1831 shows them to have been $2.25 in Massachusetts, $2.60 in New Hampshire, $1.84 in Vermont, $2.33 in Maine, $2.20 in Connecticut and Rhode Island, $1.90 in New York and New Jersey, $2.00 in Pennsylvania and Delaware, $1.91 in Maryland, and $1.58 in Virginia.[93] As New England girls had to pay about $1.25 for board [94] they had a surplus varying with the amount of wages they received. In 1829 *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser,* said that the Lowell girls earned about $1.75 in addition to board.[95]

Nevertheless, when employers tried to introduce new rules or cut down wages the girls struck. In 1828 the girls in Dover, New Hampshire, struck against the introduction of a new set of factory rules which imposed a fine for tardiness and provided for a certificate of regular discharge for those who had faithfully performed their duty. The natural inference was that those who could not secure such a certificate could not again obtain employment from that company and perhaps not from others. This strike was widely commented upon in the contemporary press.[96] In 1834 a second strike occurred in

92 *Ibid.*, Sept. 26, 1835.

93 *Report on the Production and Manufacture of Cotton*, 1832, New York Convention of the Friends of Domestic Industry, 16.

94 Boston *Transcript*, Oct. 8, 1836, quoted from the Lowell *Star*.

95 Aug. 26, 1829.

96 Boston *Commercial Gazette*, Jan. 5, 1829; New York *American*, Jan. 5, 1829; *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, Jan. 6, 1829; *National Gazette*, Jan. 7, 1829; *Mechanics' Free Press*, Jan. 17, 1829; *Free Trade Advocate*, Jan. 31, 1829.

Dover in which 800 girls were involved. This time it was against a reduction in wages.[1]

The other known strikes occurred in Massachusetts; in Taunton in 1829,[2] in Lowell one in 1834 and one in 1836,[3] and in Springfield, one in the latter year.[4] The first two were against reduction in wages, the third against an increase in the price of board which was equivalent to a reduction in wages; the cause for the last is unknown.

Of these the strike which attracted the most public attention was the first Lowell strike which was caused by the announcement, in February, 1834, of a 15 per cent. reduction in wages. Employers all over the country were complaining of a rise in the price of cotton, and were reducing wages to protect their profits. The Lowell girls resented this, and some 800 to 2,000 of them not only went on strike but were persuaded by one of their leaders to "'make a run' on the Lowell Bank and the Savings Bank."[5] "We are told," said the Boston *Transcript*,[6] "that one of the leaders mounted a pump, and made a flaming Mary Wollstoncraft speech on the rights of women and the iniquities of the 'monied aristocracy' which produced a powerful effect on her auditors, and they determined to have their own way, if they died for it.'" The girls mocked the statement of the employers that they were forced to reduce wages because of depression, and declared that if any are in want of assistance "the Ladies will be compassionate, and assist them." But they added, "we prefer to have the disposing of our charities in our own hands. . . ."[7] Nevertheless, in a few days all except the ringleaders, who were "refused entrance into the mills," went back to work at the reduced wages.[8]

1 Boston *Courier*, Mar. 5, 1834; New York *Transcript*, Mar. 13, 1834; *The Man*, Mar. 8 and 11, 1834.

2 *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, May 12, 1829; *National Gazette*, May 11, 1829; Boston *Columbian Centinel*, May 9, 1829.

3 The *Star* (Lowell), quoted in Boston *Transcript*, Oct. 8, 1836; Lowell *Courier*, quoted in Boston *Courier*, Oct. 7, 1836; New York *Era*, quoted in *National Laborer*, Oct. 29, 1836.

4 Andrews and Bliss, *History of Women in Trade Unions*, Sen. Doc. No. 645, 61st Cong., 2nd Sess., X, 36 (1911).

5 *The Man*, Feb. 22, 1834.

6 Feb. 17, 1834; *The Man*, Feb. 20, 1834.

7 *The Man*, Feb. 22, 1834; Boston *Transcript*, Feb. 18, 1834.

8 Essex *Tribune*, Feb. 22, 1834; quoted from the Lowell *Journal*. For a fuller description of all these strikes, see Andrews and Bliss, *History of Women in Trade Unions*.

CHAPTER IV

THE NATIONAL TRADES' UNION [1]

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TOWARDS NATIONAL FEDERATION

THE episode of the National Trades' Union was the third in the development of trade unionism in the thirties. First came the locals, then the city central, and then this national organisation. It was organised in August, 1834, and disappeared in May, 1837.

The presence of a large number of workingmen organised locally led to this further development. In 1834, New York and Brooklyn were said to have had 11,500 trade unionists, Philadelphia, 6,000, Boston, 4,000, Baltimore, 3,500, Washington, D. C., 500, and Newark, New Jersey, 750, a total of 26,250.[2] In 1836, at the time of the third meeting of the National Trades' Union, the number estimated was 300,000.[3] "That state of feebleness," said an "address to the public,"

1 The only references to this organisation prior to the publication of the *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, are those made by Ely, *Labor Movement in America*, 56, and E. Woollen, "Labor Troubles between 1834 and 1837," *Yale Review*, 1892, I, 89. The former says: "The first widespread labour agitation in the United States seems to have reached a climax about 1835, in which year I see mention made of a National Trades-Union, although I have been able to find nothing further about it than that Seth Luther was one of its delegates." Woollen says: "A convention of delegates said to represent all the trades in the United States, met at New York in August, 1834, and again in 1835. The records of any subsequent meetings are not obtainable, and no mention of this 'republic of labour' has been found later than 1838." See article based on the source material of the *Doc. Hist.*, by Commons, "Labor Organizations and Labor Politics, 1827–37," in *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, XXI, 323 *et seq.*

2 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, June 21, 1834.

3 *National Laborer*, June 4, 1836.

"that in the first case suggested a union of the members of a trade into Societies, suggested also in the second a Union of the Trade Societies, which should be carried into effect throughout the United States. The rights of each individual would then be sustained by every workingman in the country, whose aggregate wealth and power would be able to resist the most formidable oppression." [4]

More particularly the purposes of the Union, as stated in the constitution adopted in 1834, were "to advance the moral and intellectual condition and pecuniary interests of the labouring classes, promote the establishment of Trades' Unions in every section of the United States; and also to publish and disseminate such information as may be useful to Mechanics and Working Men generally; and to unite and harmonise the efforts of all the productive classes of the country." [5]

CONVENTION OF 1834

In March, 1834, the General Trades' Union of New York issued an invitation to the trades' unions of the country to meet in national convention on the second day of July at New York City. The invitation urged upon those "fellow mechanics who have not yet formed 'Trades' Unions' to form such 'Unions'" and send delegates. But on account of the cholera epidemic in the city during the summer of 1834 [6] the convention did not meet until the last week in August, when delegates from Boston, New York, Brooklyn, Poughkeepsie, Newark, and Philadelphia convened in the city hall.[7] The trades' unions of Washington and Baltimore were not represented.[8]

The convention organised by calling Ely Moore, then president of the New York Union, to the chair. B. H. Hammond, of Boston, and Thomas Hogan, of Philadelphia, were elected vice-presidents; William English, of Philadelphia, was made recording secretary and J. L. Parsons, of Boston, corresponding secretary. Robert Townsend, a New York carpenter, rec-

4 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, May 17, 1834.

5 *Constitution* adopted Aug. 28, 1834; *The Man*, Sept. 2, 1834; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 224.

6 *National Trades' Union*, Aug. 23, 1834.

7 *The Man*, Sept. 2, 1834; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 196.

8 The proceedings were published in *The Man*, Aug. 26–30, and Sept. 2, 1834, also in the *National Trades' Union*, Aug. 30, and Sept. 6, 1834; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 197–227.

ommended that committees be appointed, one "to draft an address to the mechanics and labouring classes of the United States"; one "to draft resolutions expressive of the views of the Convention on the social, civic and political conditions of the labouring classes of the country"; another to memorialise Congress "on those evils to which the labouring classes are subjected, and the remedy for which is within the constitutional power of the General Government"; and another to draft a constitution. On the following day still another was appointed to report on such business as was not referred to the other committees.

The recommendation that a committee be appointed to voice "the views of the convention on the social, civil and political conditions of the labouring classes" plunged the body into a discussion of the word "politics." Thus started the controversy which for nearly a century has been waging back and forth between "economic" and "political" action. Little has been added by three generations of unionism to what was said at this early date.[9] A shoemaker from Newark would omit the word "political," because it might array against them "the force of one or other of the political parties." Townsend replied that the word politics was used as a bugbear "by the aristocracy" and this should not be allowed to frighten the working classes. They should "review all the measures of public men and public bodies," for the sufferers from unequal laws are "the useful labouring classes." Dr. Charles Douglass, from Boston, the editor of *The Artisan,* and the only delegate not a wage-earner, declared that they belonged not to Jacksonism or Clayism, "nor any other *ism but workeyism*"; that they had been degraded by bad legislation, and "how were they to get out but by legislating themselves out? . . . This was their *policy,* this their *politics.*" The Newark shoemaker agreed to this philosophical definition of politics, but thought their constituents would not so understand it. They would think only of party politics. The first thing is for the trades to "organise and improve their conditions." William English, of Philadelphia, recited the merger of the Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations in the Working Men's party of 1828 and

9 *The Man*, Sept. 6, 1834; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 211.

"both were now extinct." It was difficult enough as it was to get unions to send delegates — two societies in Philadelphia had refused and neither the Wilmington nor Washington unions were represented. Townsend now conceded that "if the word political could be construed to form *party,* he would say strike it out." John Ferral, of Philadelphia, thought that from the shape the debate had taken, the convention could be charged with being acted upon by sound rather than by sense. But if the word "political" was a stumbling block, "if the delegates thought their constituents were only babes in knowledge, why not feed them with pap, and as they advance give them more solid food?" He then moved that the resolution be amended by striking out the word "political" and inserting in its stead "intellectual," though "he was fully satisfied that the working classes would never effectually remedy the evils under which they were suffering until they carried their grievances to the polls." This amendment was carried and thus it came about that the constitution declared the object of the National Trades' Union to be "moral," "intellectual," and "pecuniary."

On the last day of the convention the committee reported a series of resolutions which was unanimously adopted as the sense of the organisation. Impressed with the conviction "that the primary causes of all the evils and difficulties with which the labouring classes are environed, can be traced to the want of a correct knowledge of their own resources," the committee recommended "that such of the working classes of these United States as have not already formed themselves into societies for the protection of their industry, do so forthwith, that they may by these means be enabled effectively to make common cause with their oppressed brethren, and the more speedily disseminate such knowledge as may be most conducive to their interests in their respective trades and arts, as well as their general interests as productive labourers." It deprecated the existing system of education, which fostered by means of colleges, universities, and military and naval academies "a professional Monopoly of Knowledge, thereby drawing a line of demarcation between the producers of all the wealth, and the other portions of society which subsist upon the fruits of the Working Man's

industry"; and urged that the trades' unions represented in convention take into serious consideration the importance "of an Equal, Universal, Republican system of Education."

It disapproved the present system of disposing of the public lands, "seeing that the whole of the unseated lands belong unto the people" who have "a just claim to an equitable portion thereof, a location . . . being the only just title thereto." The sale of the public lands, it said, affected the independence of the labouring classes. The greater portion of them, owing to the repeated reductions in wages following the oversupply of labour, had no money with which to buy it. It would be different if the lands were left open to actual settlers. The surplus labourers would be drained off, and the demand for the products of the remaining would be increased.

The committee viewed with "serious alarm the deplorable condition" of children in the cotton and woolen factories, arising from the early age at which they were put to work and the "enormous length of time allotted for a day's work," and it called upon trades' unions to memorialise the legislatures, "embodying therein the outline of such a plan as may be approved by them." It urged the necessity of repealing the laws under which trades' unions were declared illegal combinations, and declared that "productive labourers" should "regain and maintain by correct legislation what they have lost by inattention to their own best interests." [10]

The resolution that the city trades' unions should take action against the deplorable conditions under which factory children worked provoked a bitter invective against the entire factory system from Charles Douglass who, as president of the New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics, and Other Working Men, was familiar with the surroundings of children workers. He painted a picture of Lowell just the reverse of that usually depicted, with its praise of the high character of the girls employed, the improvement clubs, the circulating libraries, the Sunday schools, and the well-kept boarding houses. In Lowell, he said, there were about 4,000 females of various ages "now dragging out a life of slavery and wretchedness." It is enough to make one's heart ache, he said, "to behold

10 *National Trades' Union*, Aug. 30, and Sept. 6, 1834; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 209.

these degraded females, as they pass out of the factory — to watch their wan countenances — their woe-stricken appearance. These establishments are the present abode of wretchedness, disease, and misery; and are inevitably calculated to perpetuate them — if not to destroy liberty itself!" Within the last few years, he pointed out, "the sons of our farmers, as soon as they are of sufficient age, have been induced to hasten off to the factory, where for a few pence more than they could get at home, they are taught to become the willing servants, the servile instruments of their employers' oppression and extortion!" The daughter, too, to be sure, he said, earned a little more money, "but as surely loses health, if not her good character, her happiness!" As a remedy he proposed to go before the legislatures to expose those employers "who make their enormous percentage at a yearly expense of hundreds of lives!" They must be forced to shut their mills at a regular hour, "so that all may have an opportunity to rest their weary limbs, and to enjoy free and wholesome air."

Here Townsend again raised the political spectre. He agreed with Douglass that the conditions under which the factory operatives worked demanded serious attention. But as the remedy lay in a political direction, he feared, from the sensitiveness of some, no immediate reform could be accomplished. John Commerford, of New York, turned the discussion into a new channel and was seconded by John Ferral. He, too, deplored the miserable conditions of the factory hands, but instead of putting the blame on employers, he laid it at the door of the "American system." Our tariff, he said, was laid to establish the factory system here; "every expedient necessary to insure its success had been resorted to by its advocates — every advantage had been taken of wind, water, and poverty, to fasten it upon us." England was held up as an example, but "all the miseries of her labouring classes was overlooked; and we were told that her riches accrued from the industry and inventive genius of her people." "It is true, sir," he said, "that her wealth has arisen from these sources; but it is equally true, that the moral degradation of her people may be attributed to her manufacturing system. No one will dispute that the same causes produce the like effects." The

discussion ended in the hope expressed by John Ferral, that, "every individual would feel himself obligated, as a citizen of this free republic, to use all diligence for the entire reformation of this system." [11]

With the recommendation that every citizen should do the best he could the first convention closed. This was in accord with the action taken on other measures. The convention simply called attention to grievances and suggested remedies. Indeed, the constitution, adopted at this time, created nothing but a national medium for conducting agitation, without administrative or disciplinary control over local unions or societies. It created a union composed of delegates from the several trades' unions in the United States, the number not to exceed one for each society in a union. It provided for the usual officers, but gave them no power other than that required by parliamentary practice. It created a "finance committee," consisting of one member from each union represented, "to compute" the expenses of the national union, but, in order to pay them, provided that "each member thereof draw on the funds of the union to which he belongs for his proportion of the expenses."

CONVENTION OF 1835

The convention of 1835 was held from the first to the sixth of October, again in New York City.[12] Twenty-six delegates were present from the state of New York, 5 from New Jersey, 5 from Pennsylvania, and 5 from Maryland, making a total of 41, as compared with 30 present at the preceding convention. The Boston Trades' Union no longer existed, but the carpenters who had just gone through a ten-hour strike sent three delegates. These were seated, notwithstanding the rule that representatives coming from individual societies were not to be admitted. John Ferral, of Philadelphia, was elected president, A. J. W. Jackson, of Baltimore, vice-president, and Levi D. Slamm, of New York, secretary. Upon motion, each union represented appointed a member to serve on the Finance committee.

No material changes occurred during this convention in the

11 *National Trades' Union*, Sept. 13, 1834, quoted in *The Man*, Sept. 17, 1834; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 217–224.

12 *National Trades' Union*, Oct. 10, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 228–263.

structure, purpose, or power of the organisation. Its representation was slightly enlarged: in addition to trades' unions, "Trade Societies in places where no Unions are established" could henceforth send delegates. The convention did, however, attempt to make itself a little more compact. The president was given power to fill vacancies in offices that might occur during the recess of the convention. The office of treasurer was created, and the finance committee was instructed to turn over the money its members collected from the unions they represented, to him, who in turn, was "to dispose of it in such manner as the Union may direct." [13] A "Committee of General Correspondence" was appointed in order to bring the members closer to each other.[14] These changes gave the organisation a semblance of existence between sittings.

Two committees on propaganda were appointed, one a "Committee of Ways and Means," "to further the formation of Trade Societies and Trades' Unions throughout the United States," and another to suggest such measures to the Convention, "as may be thought necessary to promote the welfare of the workingman." The latter committee recommended that an address be issued to the workingmen of the United States "urging upon them the necessity of forming Trades' Unions in every section of the country"; that "the importance of selecting persons to deliver lectures to the producing classes, on their social, intellectual and pecuniary conditions" be recommended to the trades' unions; that the proceedings of this and the previous convention be published in pamphlet form; that the different trades' unions "oppose energetically and honourably the present system of State Prison Labour"; and that it be recommended to the unions represented that each society "fix a regular price for their labour, so that an equality of wages may be established throughout the country." [15]

The committee on ways and means worked out a plan for organising labour. It advised that a "Board of Commissioners for the Protection of Labour," consisting of one member from each trades' union, be appointed, "Whose duty it shall be to take measures to form Trade Societies and Trades' Unions in all cities and towns in the United States, on such principles

13 *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 259–261. 14 *Ibid.*, 230. 15 *Ibid.*, 235–237.

as are recognised by the National Trades' Union." The commissioners were to meet quarterly at such places as they might designate and were to be given power to employ "an agent or agents, who shall travel and deliver lectures on the formation of Trades' Unions, and to render every assistance in his or their power, under the direction and control of the Board, to accomplish the objects which the National Trades' Union have in view." To cover the expense of such an enterprise the committee recommended that each trades' union tax itself "two cents per month on each and every member of the Trades attached," and that the fund so created be subject to the order of the Board of Commissioners. In return, the Board was to report quarterly to each trades' union contributing and annually to the National Trades' Union.[16] It should be remembered that these were simply recommendations, and had no binding effect on the member unions and societies.

The subjects discussed this year were mainly the same as those discussed in 1834 and much the same in tone. Woman and child labour in cotton factories was deplored and female labour in general was condemned, as debasing to the woman and bringing "destructive competition with the male labourer." [17] Prison labour was considered and a committee appointed to investigate the problem. The New York delegation, upon whom this problem bore most heavily, was advised to memorialise the next legislature to pass a law which should require the marking of "all Locks and other articles which may thereafter be made in the State Prison, with the name of the contractor and the prison in which they may be manufactured." [18] Public education was criticised, in that not sufficient attention was paid to the qualifications of teachers selected to teach the children of the working classes, and, supplementary to public education, the city unions were advised to take measures "for the establishment of Libraries in the cities, towns and villages, where such Unions and Societies are located, for the use and benefit of mechanics and workingmen." [19] The public land question, a question "of the most vital importance to the Labouring classes," was disposed of by appointing a com-

16 *Ibid.*, 240–242.
17 *Ibid.*, 250–257.
18 *Ibid.*, 244.
19 *Ibid.*, 256.

mittee to memorialise Congress;[20] and the principle of a protective tariff was endorsed but with moderation. The convention repudiated the practice of the Government in levying high duties on imported merchandise, but conceived that it was the duty of the government "to protect the mechanic arts that have grown up with the country, and have become, as it were, bone of its bone and flesh of its flesh."[21]

Two questions, not discussed in the previous convention, came up rather prominently this year, namely, hours and wages. The activities of the local unions and societies were reflected in the national convention. A committee was appointed to report on the progress of the ten-hour system and it reported that in all places of importance except in Boston and in Government works the ten-hour day was in vogue. It was at this convention that the National Trades' Union, as already stated above,[22] voted to memorialise Congress to introduce the ten-hour system in Government works.

On the question of wages the Union worked out an elaborate scheme. If only the united strength of this body, it was declared, could be carried "more effectually into operation throughout the various unions of these States," defeat, such as just gone through would not recur. The defeat referred to, no doubt, was the defeat in the carpenters' strike in Boston. It was proposed that, whenever a trade undertook to regulate prices or advance wages, "so that there may be a corresponding uniformity of prices in all places where Unions exist," the Union should "make one general strike" if the employers combined to resist it. But before doing so, it should await the recommendations of the various city central unions. The plan further provided that a committee of correspondence "ascertain and provide employment for all such as may choose to emigrate to parts of the country where the labourer's worth is more fully felt and appreciated."[23]

CONVENTION OF 1836

The convention of 1836 met at Philadelphia, in Military

20 *Ibid.*, 240.
21 *Ibid.*, 257.
22 See above, I, 394.
23 *National Trades' Union*, Oct. 10, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 251–253.

Hall, October 24 to 28.[24] Thirty-five delegates were present from New York City, Albany, Newark, Pittsburgh, Reading, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, and Cincinnati. Pittsburgh and Cincinnati then represented the Far West and for the first time had delegates in the national convention. From Boston no one was present. Even the individual societies which were now entitled to send delegates sent no one and were only indirectly represented by Dr. Charles Douglass, now of New London, Connecticut, and spokesman rather for the women and children working in the cotton factories of Massachusetts than the mechanics of Boston. Alexander J. W. Jackson, of Baltimore, was elected president, James Murray, of Pittsburgh, and Amaziah Whitney, of Albany, vice-presidents, Thomas Hogan and Josef D. Miller, of Philadelphia, respectively corresponding and recording secretaries, and John Commerford, of New York, treasurer. A finance committee of seven was also elected.

This was the last convention of the National Trades' Union of which we have a record.[25] It went far beyond preceding conventions in its plans for solidifying the workingmen of the country and for giving the organisation an individuality separate from the city assemblies and local societies of which it was composed. First and foremost, a "national fund" was created to be made up of a levy of 2 cents per month on each of the members of the trades' unions and local societies represented. The dues, according to the constitution, were to be paid to the national organisation annually, and those who failed to pay forfeited their membership and were not readmitted until all dues were paid. In this connection the treasurer was now required to give "such security as the Union may direct," and the president and recording secretary were directed to countersign all orders upon the treasury. Another step taken was that the acts of the Union were now to be binding rather than advisory; the constitution provided that "all acts and resolutions adopted by this Union, shall be equally binding on the different Unions and Societies who may ratify

24 *National Laborer*, Oct. 29, Nov. 5 and 12, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 265–307.

25 The only evidence of a convention in 1837 is an invitation in the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, May 4, 1837, to "the Working Men and Citizens generally" to attend its meetings.

this Constitution." Still another measure taken to perfect the organisation was that of giving the officers power to call special conventions, a thing which they could not do before unless "required by the application of a majority of the Unions" therein represented. The form of representation was also changed. Instead of each union sending one delegate for each society in its membership, each union was now allowed one delegate for the first 200 members or less, and additional delegates in proportion.[26]

The old questions of education, public lands, prison labour, a ten-hour day in Government works, the factory system, female labour, which had been discussed in previous years, again came up, but new questions appeared on the horizon, indicative of the times. Since prices, in some instances, had doubled, and wages, even with costly strikes, had not kept pace, the Union endeavoured to find the causes and devise remedies. The questions of "speculation" and co-operation thus came up. When it was proposed that a committee on public lands be created, a Philadelphia saddler moved that the words "public lands" be stricken out and that the word "banking" be inserted. Upon a roll call, however, the motion was defeated 20 to 12. But the subject again came up in a motion to start an enquiry "into the sources of the great system of speculation," through which as it was stated "they who produce nothing receive nearly all the products of the labour of those that produce, while they who produce all receive but a mite of their own labour."

The Committee assigned to the task laid the difficulty at the door of a fluctuating currency. With a fluctuating currency, it said, the reward of the industry does not go to the productive labourer, but to the speculator. A man who hires out for a certain price and then, because of a fluctuating currency cannot purchase an amount equal to the face value of his money, is defrauded. This speculation is encouraged by "the division of the workingmen into employers and journeymen," a system which debars the "actual operative" from having control over his labour. As a remedy the committee proposed co-operation;

26 *Constitution* adopted Oct. 28, 1836; *National Laborer*, Nov. 5, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 304–307.

it would restore to the labourer the disposal of his own products.[27]

A special committee on co-operation approved the idea. It was a subject of "great interest to all producers." As it would require a more extensive investigation than time would permit, it, for the present, recommended that trades' unions, trades' societies, and mechanics of all branches be requested to take measures to investigate the subject. It also wished the convention to express the opinion "that if Trades' Unions and Trade Societies were to apply their funds to the establishing of Co-operation in Societies suffering aggression, instead of exhausting their funds by supporting strikes, a much more permanent benefit would be rendered."[28]

Special reports were also submitted to this convention on the need of unions,[29] prison labour,[30] ten-hour system on government works,[31] and female labour. The committee on female labour in a lengthy report pronounced it a physical and moral injury to woman and competitive menace to man. In Philadelphia out "of fifty-eight societies, twenty-four are seriously affected by female labour." If the evil stopped here it might be controlled; "but the desire of gain is such that there is no limits [sic] that could confine it." So long as the employers are allowed to experiment on the labour of the sexes "each trade, except it be of the most labourious character, is in danger of the innovation." This fact is apparent, for, "when the females are found capable of performing duty generally performed by the men, as a natural consequence, from the cheapness of their habits and dependent situation, they acquire complete control of that particular branch of labour." "The evil, however," declared the report, "has been saddled upon us, and it is our duty, as well as interest, to propose such remedies as the case may require." It must be destroyed gradually, the state legislatures should be required to enact laws "preventing females under a certain age from being employed in large factories," but above all the females themselves must co-operate and form organisations. In the city of Philadelphia a "So-

27 *National Laborer*, Nov. 19, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 291–293.
28 *National Laborer*, Dec. 3, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 298, 299.
29 *Ibid.*, Nov. 26, 1836; *Ibid.*, 294–297.
30 *Ibid.*, Nov. 26, 1836; *Ibid.*, 297, 298.
31 *Ibid.*, Dec. 10, 1836; *Ibid.*, 299–304.

ciety of Female Operatives exists, numbering near four hundred, governed on the same principles as the other Trade Societies, which, in time, no doubt will effectuate much good, and two or three other societies are composed in part by females who have received a proportionate benefit with the males." The women's clubs, of which there are twenty in Philadelphia, instead of supporting foreign missions, should co-operate with these women and thus defeat the oppression of the employers. The trade societies themselves that are affected by female labour ought to "regulate their laws in such way as to admit those females" into their societies "or raise the societies of females" and make them auxiliary to themselves "so that in case of difficulty they would be governed by their laws and receive their support."[32]

32 *National Laborer*, Nov. 12, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 281 *et seq.*

CHAPTER V

PREMATURE NATIONAL TRADE UNIONS

Changes in the Means of Transportation and Communication. Canals, 438. Railways, 439. Extension of the area of commodity competition, 440. Extension of the area of labour competition, 440. Idea of a national trade union, 441.

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CHANGES IN TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

The National Trades' Union never became more than an agitational and advisory convention. Moreover, its advice was merely on subjects affecting labour in general, such as the factory system, woman and child labour, prison labour, education, the ten-hour day, tariff, the public domain, and co-operation. As a body representative of labour at large it could not consider problems of individual crafts. This remained for national unions within the crafts themselves. During 1835 and 1836 at least five trades held national conventions and organised on a national basis.

The large number of local societies that had now been organised, coupled with the fact that the extensive internal improvements made at this time brought their members into competition with one another, occasioned the formation of these unions. It was in the late twenties and thirties that the turnpike and stage-coach were supplemented by the canal and steam-

boat, thus knitting the remote parts of the inhabited country into closer relationship. The Erie Canal, connecting Lake Erie at Buffalo with the Hudson River at Albany, and forming with that river a continuous waterway between the Great Lakes and the Atlantic, was opened in October, 1825.

Its effects were immediate. The cost of transportation from Buffalo to New York City before the days of the canal was $100 a ton with an ordinary passage of twenty days; afterwards it was $15 to $25, according to the class, with a passage of eight days.[1] It also demonstrated the practicability of long distance canals, and kindled a jealousy for the western trade, which other Atlantic States had been sharing under like difficulties, but which now bid fair to go to New York. In 1826 Pennsylvania started her combined system of canals and railways to Pittsburgh and completed it in 1834.[2] In the same year Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania chartered a joint-stock company to construct the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal never completing it, however.[3] In 1830, Ohio connected Cincinnati with Dayton, and in 1832, Lake Erie with the Ohio River.[4] These canals, together with numerous branches, and with improved rivers and slack waterpools, furnished continuous waterways between the manufacturing and commercial Atlantic seaboard and the agricultural regions in the basins of the Great Lakes, Ohio and Mississippi rivers.

Localities that found canals impracticable projected railways. As a primary means of transportation railways were not yet thought of, nevertheless, at the close of the thirties, there were 2,264 miles of such roads in the country.[5] On July 4, 1828 the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad was begun and completed as far as Cumberland in 1842. In 1833, the South Carolina was completed inland a distance of 136 miles.[6] In 1838, through the linking of three small roads, Boston was able to tap the

1 Poor, *Manual of Railroads of the United States*, introduction, pp. i–xvi; Tanner, *A Description of the Canals and Rail Roads of the United States*, 50–55; Bogart, *The Economic History of the United States*, 190–192.

2 Tanner, *A Description of the Canals and Rail Roads of the United States*, 97–102, 113–129; Poor, *Manual of Railroads of the United States*, XVI.

3 Tanner, *A Description of the Canals and Rail Roads of the United States*, 158, 159; Coman, *Industrial History of the United States*, 222.

4 Tanner, *A Description of the Canals and Rail Roads of the United States*, 209–211.

5 *U. S. Census*, 1880, *Report on the Agencies of Transportation in the United States*, 289.

6 Tanner, *A Description of the Canals and Rail Roads of the United States*, 169, 170.

trade that came by way of the Erie Canal.[7] Besides these roads which bent westward, a large number of other small roads were opened coastwise, to connect points which hitherto had been connected only by stage-coach, and to furnish rapid transit for travellers and light merchandise between them. Thus to mention only a few of the better known roads; in Massachusetts, the Boston & Lowell (26.50 miles) and the Boston and Providence (41 miles) were opened in 1834,[8] in New York, the Saratoga and Schenectady (21.50 miles), in 1831,[9] in New Jersey, the Camden and Amboy (61 miles), in 1837, and the Trenton & New Brunswick (27 miles), in 1838.[10] In Maryland a branch (38 miles) to the Baltimore & Ohio, connecting Baltimore and Washington, was completed in 1835.[11]

These improvements [12] brought the industrial centres more closely together and threw them into competition with one another. After a strike in New York City in 1835, the cordwainers declared the strike would never have taken place "had it not been for the difficulty of raising the retail prices, on account of the great quantity of *cheap work* brought from the Eastern States." [13] In the same year the saddlers of Philadelphia, during a strike for higher wages, found it necessary to warn buyers of Philadelphia goods in Virginia, South Carolina, Louisiana, and Ohio that they were not actually getting Philadelphia goods, in buying at Philadelphia, because their employers during the strike were importing "*Eastern work*, for the purpose of filling their orders." [14]

Not only did goods now pass freely between communities, but passengers too, so that during difficulties with their workmen, employers were able also to advertise for men elsewhere. During a strike of cordwainers in New Brunswick, New Jersey, in 1836, the employers advertised in Philadelphia for 200 men.[15] The master builders of Cincinnati, during a strike of their journeymen, advertised for carpenters, stonecutters, and masons in Philadelphia, but the journeymen of the latter city

7 *Ibid.*, 38–40, 76.
8 *Ibid.*, 35, 41, 42.
9 *Ibid.*, 78.
10 *Ibid.*, 88–90, 98.
11 *Ibid.*, 155–157.
12 For a full account of internal improvements in the United States, the reader is referred to Meyer, *History of Transportation down to 1850*, published by the Carnegie Institution of Washington.
13 *National Trades' Union*, June 6, 1835.
14 *Pennsylvanian*, Aug. 4, 1835.
15 *The Man*, June 5, 1835.

announced through the *Pennsylvanian* [16] that no attention would be paid to the advertisement as it was "only a dupe to catch gulls." The Philadelphia saddlers and harness-makers, who in 1835 called a strike for higher wages, appointed a committee to issue a circular "to the Journeymen Saddlers and Harness Makers Throughout the United States," and requested them not to seek employment in Philadelphia. "You are all requested," the circular declared, "to refuse any offers tendered by employers for work, by the year, month, week, or single job. This is a principle acknowledged by nations, and acted upon in case of war." [17]

The likelihood of importing foreign goods and strike-breakers during difficulties with their employers occasioned frequent correspondence between local societies. This drew them together into a closer bond, and the formation of national unions was only one step farther. Although correspondence passed between locals in a number of trades, especially during strikes, and although in several trades national organisations were proposed, as among the coach makers, spinners, saddlers, cabinet-makers, iron-moulders, and paper makers, only five trades actually organised, namely, the cordwainers, printers, comb makers, carpenters, and hand loom weavers.

THE NATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION OF JOURNEYMEN CORDWAINERS

The cordwainers were first in the field. Perhaps no other trade at this time was so completely in the hands of the merchant-capitalist. Immediately after the convention of the National Trades' Union held in New York in October, 1835, the shoemaker delegates met and resolved to "form a general union of Cordwainers throughout the United States." [18]

The first convention [19] was held in New York City, in March, 1836. There were present forty-five delegates from New York and fifteen near-by places: New Haven, Connecticut; Brooklyn, New York; Newark, Elizabethtown, Rahway, Orange, Paterson, Bloomfield, Clinton, and New Brunswick, New Jersey;

16 June 8, 1835.

17 New York *Evening Post*, Aug. 1, 1835.

18 *National Trades' Union*, Oct. 10, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 315.

19 *National Trades' Union*, Feb. 6, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 316 *et seq.*

Philadelphia, Easton, Columbia, and Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Wilmington, Delaware. Letters were received from Troy, Albany, and Schenectady, New York, and Washington, D. C., approving the convention and expressing readiness to co-operate in any measure it might recommend. A constitution was adopted and the organisation named the "National Co-operative Association of Journeymen Cordwainers." All societies were "to hold regular quarterly correspondence" imparting to each other "all designs for the improvement of the Trade for the ensuing quarter." In case of a strike for higher wages or against a reduction of the same by one society, all other societies, when called upon for support, were to levy not less than 6¼ cents per week upon each member to support the strike. During a strike no society was to issue certificates to its members for the purpose of visiting the city where the strike was going on, with the intention of working. An infringement upon the rule by any member, after having obtained a certificate was to be considered "an act of scabbing," and the offender was to be subjected to a fine of not less than $5. It was further provided that each society, in case a member of another society visited its town, was to give a certain sum of money to the member "to enable him to pursue his journey," in order "to obviate the necessity of his working at reduced wages." These articles were to be binding on all societies agreeing to the same.

The most important work of the convention was the adoption of a standard bill of prices for the trade throughout the country. While this list has not been found, its adoption is seen in the recommendation to the cordwainers of Newark, Elizabethtown, Bloomfield, and Philadelphia, to strike for higher wages and to "present a Bill of Wages, which shall not be less than a reduction of 6 per cent. on the Standard Bill adopted by this Convention." The cordwainers of the New England States whose wages were "far below those given in the middle and southern states" and who were not represented in the convention, were also asked to organise and adopt the standard wages.

Other questions considered were woman labour, apprenticeship, prison labour, foreign-made goods, and the decision of Judge Savage in the conspiracy of the Geneva boot and shoe-

makers. As to women labour resolutions were adopted recommending organisation; in that way women's wages will be increased. As to apprenticeship the different societies were urged to adopt measures preventing any member from taking more than two apprentices at one time.[20] The importation of foreign goods was declared to be "destructive to the interests of the journeymen engaged in the manufacture of these indispensable articles, inasmuch as they are disposed of at reduced prices, and thereby cause a reduction of wages." The journeymen were asked to refuse "their labour to any person engaged in importing or vending such articles." Prison labour was to be investigated and if found in competition with free labour, the journeymen were to refuse their labour to any establishment "that may hold for sale boots or shoes manufactured by convicts in the penitentiaries." The decision of Judge Savage was made a special order of the day, and a committee was appointed to review the decision and to recommend action.

This is the first and last convention of which we have any record. Here it was agreed that a meeting be held in September of the same year at such place as the officers might designate, and in a notice in the *National Laborer*,[21] we are informed of a meeting to be held in New York City on the second Monday in November. Societies which had subscribed to the constitution were requested to send their quota of delegates and other societies were asked to send "one or more persons to this meeting, or address thereto such communication as they deem proper for the advancement of the objects in view." No further evidence of the meeting has been found.

Likewise from the *Public Ledger* [22] we learn that a national convention was to be held on September 25, 1837, in Philadelphia, but here again we have no further record.

NATIONAL TYPOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

From 1830 to 1836 at least 14 societies of printers were reorganised or newly organised in 14 different places. These were New York, Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Baltimore, Richmond, Charleston, Columbia, South Carolina, Augusta, Mobile,

20 See above, I, 339 *et seq.*
21 Oct. 22, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 330.
22 Sept. 23, 1837; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 330, 331.

New Orleans, Natchez, Louisville, Nashville, and Cincinnati. In Washington the Columbia Typographical Society which was organised in 1815 continued to exist in its old form. Frequent correspondence passed between these societies. The Philadelphia society soon after its organisation in 1833 authorised "correspondence to be established with the typographical trade societies throughout the union." Likewise the Richmond society, upon organising in 1834, issued a letter to the trade and invited correspondence from other societies.[23] The communications thus voluntarily begun, in order, as stated by the Philadelphia society, "to elicit and impart authentic intelligence connected with the interests of the members of our common profession," led in 1836 to the formation of a national union.

The reorganisation that took place at this time as seen above,[24] constituted a change in the purpose of the organisations. Instead of giving aid to members in distress, the societies were now to protect their respective trades. This change came as a result of a change in the printing industry. During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, as population in the cities increased, the weekly paper began to give way to the daily as a carrier of news. In the thirties, as improved communications were made, bringing the cities closer together, and making possible an easier transmission of news, the change was hastened along. In 1810 there were 27 daily papers in this country,[25] in 1830, 50,[26] but in 1840 no less than 138.[27]

The practical printer, in this development, began to lose control of the business. When news travelled slowly he could, if he wished to extend his general printing business, publish a periodical paper. He could edit it, and, with the aid of a journeyman and one or two apprentices, could set the type and do the presswork. Under the new order of things a knowledge of printing was no longer of first importance; it was rather the ability to promote a paper, get funds, win subscribers, and promote some special interest. Thus men began to engage in

23 Reprints of letters from these societies in Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 902–904.

24 See above, I, 336 *et seq.*

25 *U. S. Census*, 1880, *History and Present Condition of the Newspaper and Periodical Press of the United States*, 45.

26 Coggeshall, *An Essay on Newspapers, Historical and Statistical*, read before the Ohio Editorial Association at Zanesville, Jan. 17, 1855, p. 91.

27 *U. S. Census*, 1840, Volume on Mines, Agriculture, Commerce, Manufactures, etc., in the United States, 408.

the business not primarily for the livelihood, but to propagate an interest such as politics, agriculture, industry, labour.[28]

The earliest special interest papers were those devoted to party politics. The *Aurora,* of Philadelphia, started in 1798,[29] was the mouthpiece of Jeffersonian democracy, and the New York *Evening Post* was started in 1801 with the aid of Alexander Hamilton and John Jay.[30] By the time of the thirties many papers were in the hands of politicians and were devoted to the aspirations of Jackson, Calhoun, Clay, Webster, Van Buren, and lesser lights. "Their policy," says Hudson,[31] "was dictated by party. They were sustained by party, or crushed by party." [32]

The first striking example of this injection of political capitalism into the newspaper business, and the one that directly provoked the first national union of printers into existence,[33] was the *United States Telegraph* and its affiliated enterprises. General Duff Green, who had purchased a paper in St. Louis in 1824, and who had organised the State of Missouri for Jackson, was invited by the latter to come to Washington to establish a national party organ. He came in 1826, and established the *United States Telegraph.* As a reward for his services the Jackson Democrats united in the Senate and elected him printer to that body.[34] Later he also secured the House and departmental printing, which, according to his own testimony was

28 See Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers,* 912.

29 Hudson, *Journalism in the United States, from 1690–1872,* 210–216.

30 *Ibid.,* 216, 217, 220–222.

31 *Ibid.,* 456. An independent press was, however, springing up in the penny papers which now appeared for the first time. The New York *Sun* was the pioneer in the field, its first edition appearing on Sept. 3, 1833. (*Ibid.,* 417.) It was successful and was an example to others. Shortly after it appeared, the New York *Daily Bee* was started as a penny paper. In 1834, the *Transcript* and *The Man* appeared, and in 1835 the *Morning Herald.* (*Ibid.,* 416–427, 428–430, *et seq.*) In the following year the *Public Ledger,* of Philadelphia, and in 1837 the *Sun,* of Baltimore, came out as penny papers. (*Ibid.,* 506 *et seq.*) James Gordon Bennett, who bought a share in the Philadelphia *Pennsylvanian* to help Van Buren to the presidency at the end of Jackson's second term, was ill treated by the Van Burenites, and as a result started the New York *Morning Herald.* In his prospectus he declared, "Our only guide shall be good, sound, practical common sense, applicable to the business and bosoms of men engaged in every-day life. *We shall support no party — be the organ of no faction or Coterie, and care nothing for any election or any candidate from president down to a constable.*" *Ibid.,* 432, 433.

32 See Hudson, *Journalism in the United States, from 1690 to 1872,* 308, for appointments by Jackson of editors and publishers to political positions.

33 See below, I, 450 *et seq.*

34 Kerr, *History of the Government Printing Office, with a Brief Record of the Public Printing for a Century, 1789–1881,* 17–21. At this time each house let out the contract for its own printing.

worth $50,000 a year to him,[35] and which the journeymen printers estimated brought him a profit that did "not fall short of $300,000."[36]

Other special interest papers were those devoted to agriculture, industry, and labour. Hudson, in a discussion of the "agricultural press," enumerates twelve papers established from 1818 to 1840. Three of these appeared before, and the remainder after, 1827.[37] No less than twenty-one labour papers appeared between 1833 and 1840.[38]

A specific instance of an industrial paper was the Providence *Journal*. It was founded by Samuel Slater, the founder of cotton manufacture in the United States.[39] In 1819, he, together with other business men, launched the *Journal* which was, in the words of its editor, "to have no concern in party politics," but was to be "devoted to the interests of productive industry."[40] For the most part, however, the "industrial" press was not distinguishable from the political protectionist and free trade press.

The introduction of special interests in control of newspapers was equivalent to the introduction of the middleman, or merchant-capitalist, in other industries. There were, as yet, no mechanical improvements requiring large investments in machinery. Steam power, in the operation of the printing press, was not introduced until 1835.[41] The first cylinder press, introduced in 1828,[42] was operated by hand, and typesetting itself remained for yet many years a handicraft. It was the new market for news and propaganda that divorced the master printer from control of his shop. The publisher did not need now to be a practical printer — his financial support depended on his ability to reach subscribers, voters, and subsidisers, not on his ability to manage the shop.

As newspaper printing was passing out of the control of

35 Hudson, *Journalism in the United States, from 1690 to 1872*, 236, 237.

36 From an address "To the People of the United States," in Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 997.

37 Hudson, *Journalism in the United States, from 1690 to 1872*, 330–334.

38 See Bibliography, 1833–1840, II, 561–562.

39 White, *Memoirs of Samuel Slater, the Father of American Manufactures, connected with a History of the Rise and Progress of the Cotton Manufacture in England and America*, 71–112.

40 "Some Notes on the Early History of the Journal," by the editor, William E. Richmond, in Hudson, *Journalism in the United States from 1690 to 1872*, 316–319.

41 *U. S. Census*, 1880, *The Newspaper and Periodical Press*, 100–102.

42 By the New York *Sun*. *Ibid.*

the printer so also was book printing. The change, which began in the last decade of the eighteenth century,[43] was evident in the third decade of the nineteenth in the appearance of a larger number of publishing houses. Free public schools had begun to make their demands, and the market was growing both in width and intensity. The practical printer, setting his own type and doing his own presswork, no longer could handle the business. Mathew Carey, who originally was in the printing and publishing business and who was also doing a retail trade, gradually gave up printing, and the firm of Carey & Son which succeeded him, in 1829 also gave up the retail trade and devoted itself to publishing.[44] In 1831 Daniel Appleton started as a publisher and in 1838 organised the firm of D. Appleton & Company.[45] In 1833 the firm of Harper & Brothers was organised, growing out of a general printing shop started by James and John Harper in 1817.[46] In 1836 J. B. Lippincott & Company,[47] was founded, in 1637 Little, Brown & Company [48] and in 1840 Wiley and Putnam, afterwards G. P. Putnam & Sons.[49]

The rise of the book publisher is indicated, and his influence on the trade succinctly described in an "address of the Committee of the Philadelphia Typographical Association to the Journeymen Printers of the City and County of Philadelphia," issued in 1834. The address declares:

> It is worthy of remark that in this city at least, the three most indispensable classes of persons connected with the *merchandise of literature* — journeymen printers, employing printers, and publishers have been gradually changing their relative position in regard to each other, and also to the community. There are many persons now living, in whose memories the time is fresh, when operative printers were almost the "one thing needful" in typographical undertakings — their services being earnestly sought, and amply rewarded. Employers, too, were then *allowed* to name their own prices . . . and received their dues regularly and promptly; while the publisher, as the least important person, awaited the movements of his more prominent coadjutors, and finally pocketed his portion of the avails in obtrusive [*sic*] complacency. . . . Among the pecu-

43 Pasko, *American Dictionary of Printing and Bookmaking*, 398.

44 *One Hundred Years of Publishing, 1785–1885*, p. 12.

45 Derby, *Fifty Years among Authors, Books and Publishers*, 173 *et seq.*

46 Harper, *The House of Harper*, 18–22.

47 Derby, *Fifty Years among Authors, Books and Publishers*, 382 *et seq.*

48 *Ibid.*, 670 *et seq.*

49 Putnam, *George Palmer Putnam, A Memoir*, 27, 356.

liarities of the present crisis, none is more obvious than the extremely reduced rate at which work is taken by employing printers. This circumstance early attracted the attention of members of this Association, and as there appeared but little disposition on the part of employers to remedy this serious evil, an inroad upon the prices of journeymen was apprehended as the more probable event.[50]

In other words the publisher, in controlling the market was able to force the employer to do his work at reduced prices. But in doing so the employer passed the reduction in the form of lower wages to the journeyman.

Not only was the employing printer driven to reduce wages but also to use cheap labour, "two-thirders," and apprentices. The disintegration of the apprenticeship system which had its beginning in the first two decades of the nineteenth century was greatly precipitated in the third. Speaking of the causes of the depressed condition of the trade at the time of its organisation in 1831, the New York Typographical Association cited the practice "of employing runaway or dismissed apprentices for a small compensation." They are called "two-thirds men" and "have always proved a great pest to the profession." In addition, "roller boys, having gained admission to the interior of a printing office, have in a short time found their way from the rear to the front of the press, to the discharge of the regular pressmen." [51]

It was this matter of apprenticeship that brought together the local societies in national convention in 1836. The incident which led directly to it, occurred in Washington in the printing establishment of Duff Green. Almost from the beginning of his career as newspaper publisher and printer in Washington, Green pursued a policy of repressing labour. At first he attempted to reduce wages from $10 to $8 a week. Failing in this through the successful opposition of the journeymen, he succeeded in reducing the pay for overtime from 20 cents an hour to 16⅔ cents. The next innovation was the introduction of boys into his shop, "40 or 50 of whom he employed about the period of his second Congressional term as printer."

Early in 1834 Green conceived a plan by which to extend his

50 *National Trades' Union*, Sept. 6, 1834.

51 Quoted by Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 896–899.

business at little cost to himself. In addition to the *Telegraph*, he had already begun publishing two other papers of a political character, the *Metropolitan* and the *Political Register*. Now he proposed to add journals on medicine, religion, agriculture, and on mechanic arts. In this connection he planned what he called a "Washington Institute" and what the workingmen called a "manual labour school" in which to train journeymen printers. He intended to take in about 200 boys who as students should work on his papers and in that way learn the trade. Each boy was to have $2 a week credited to him and was to stay seven years. At the end of that time he would obtain the amount to his credit to start in business for himself.[52]

The Columbia Typographical Society at once protested. The journeymen, though denying that they were trying to regulate the number of apprentices, claimed a proprietary right in their trade. A committee said: "We are a body of printers — journeymen printers. Having served years to obtain a knowledge of the business, we now pursue that business to obtain a livelihood. It is a thing of property, or — which answers the main purpose of property — it yields us a support for ourselves and our families."[53] A committee was further appointed to consider "what, in their opinion, would be the most proper and effectual course to pursue to bring about the establishment of a national typographical society."[54]

The year 1834 was a year of depression, and no further action was taken in this direction. The society for the time being deemed it sufficient to issue circulars to the trade asking journeymen elsewhere not to accept positions as instructors in Green's school. "This negative part is all that is now required of you," said the circular, dated August, 1834. But in March, 1835, when labour throughout the country became ag-

52 See Protest of the Columbia Typographical Society, Aug. 19, 1834, "addressed to the public generally, and particularly to the printers of the United States, against the Washington Institute, a school about to be organised in the city of Washington, by Duff Green, which proposes to substitute, in the printing business, the labour of boys for that of journeymen," and also an address "To the People of the United States" issued two weeks later, September 2. Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 987–1000.

53 Minutes of the Columbia Typographical Society, in *Printers' Circular*, 1867, V, 285.

54 Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 907,

gressive, the Columbia Society called a strike in Green's plant against two phases of the same imposition, the use of semi-skilled labour and low wages.[55]

In November, when the Franklin Typographical Society of Cincinnati issued a circular proposing the formation of a national union,[56] the society took up the proposition and issued a call of its own. The Cincinnati proposal was directed towards three objects: "1st. That each society in its own district be sustained by all others in the prices it may establish; 2d. That journeymen bringing certificates of membership in any society, of good standing, receive a preference over all others in the efforts made to procure them employment; 3d. That rats, pronounced such by one society, be considered as such by all other societies." The Columbia Society agreed that these should be considered by a national union and issued a call for a convention for March 3, 1836, to take place at Washington. Every typographical society in the United States was asked to send three delegates.[57]

Letters of approval were received from a number of societies, and in November delegates from Baltimore, New York, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, and Washington met in national convention.[58] New Orleans was represented by proxy, and several other societies not represented sent "apologetic letters," "but highly approving of the Convention, and expressive of their desire to be governed by its decisions." The only delegate from Philadelphia was barred from the Convention because he was recognised as one who had accepted work in the plant of Duff Green during the strike in the preceding year and had therefore been placed on the "Rat List" of the Columbia society. Peter Force, mayor of the city and members of the local printers' society, welcomed the convention.

The convention framed a constitution and recommendations to local societies and issued an address "*To the Printers throughout the United States.*"[59] In the address it was la-

55 *Ibid.*, 908, *The Man*, Apr. 1, 1835; New York *Journal of Commerce*, June 5, 1835.

56 *National Trades' Union*, Oct. 17, 1835; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 343.

57 Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 910.

58 *Proceedings of the National Typographical Convention, together with the Constitution for a National Typographical Society*, Washington, D. C., 1836.

59 *Ibid.*, 14–16.

mented "that the newspaper press has almost entirely passed from under the control of members of the Profession, into the hands of speculators and partisans, who, ignorant of the feelings and sympathies of the Craft, create dissensions and difficulties when they cannot make them subservient to their will and interest." These speculators, they said, have degraded the press. They hire boys, "six or eight at a time for a few years, to subserve their nefarious purposes, and then cast them on the Profession for support." Another evil has crept in and that is the "pernicious practice of the Legislature of many States, as well as of the Federal Government, of bestowing all their printing and binding in such manner as to reward their zealous partisans, even to the smallest job, when they are not only not printers, but entirely unacquainted with the art, to the exclusion and utter ruin of the practical man."

The remedy proposed was to tighten up the apprenticeship system and to make it uniform throughout the country. The local societies were asked to adopt rules that every apprentice should serve until he was twenty-one years of age; that none should be indentured who was above fifteen years of age; that runaway apprentices should not be accepted in any shop either as apprentices or journeymen; and that after a certain date no society should accept any one in membership who could not produce credentials that he had served six years as a regularly indentured apprentice. Within that period the convention advised that "acknowledged journeymen" should be admitted even if they could not present the required credentials.

Another proposal was that the local societies should support each other in their lists of prices. In case of a local strike for higher wages, if the Board of Control of the national society sanctioned it, all societies were "to contribute such sum as may be necessary" to sustain those on strike. No member of a society was to work in a shop with an expelled member from another society, and men pronounced "rats" by one society were to be considered such by all others.

These, however, were merely recommendations, and were not binding. Societies that wished to adopt them could do so. Others were not held to them.[60]

[60] *Ibid.*, 12, 13.

The next and last convention was held in September, 1837. Eight societies were represented, those of New York, Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Mobile, New Orleans, and Washington. Nova Scotia was represented by proxy. The name of the organisation was changed from the "National Typographical Society" to the "National Typographical Association," and the finances were considerably strengthened. Each society was required to pay 25 per cent of its annual receipts into the treasury of the national organisation "to defray all expenses incurred by the association." Another important measure adopted was a provision for a "Union Card." The national body was to supply the local societies with cards to be issued one to each member who left their respective jurisdictions. The card was to secure to a member the confidence and good offices of the society into whose jurisdiction he came. In this way the association hoped to check "the practice of employing two-third apprentices." [61]

A third convention was planned for August, 1838, but did not take place.[62] Not until 1850, with the next return of prosperity, did the printers create what became the first permanent national union of a single trade.

COMB MAKERS, CARPENTERS, AND HAND LOOM WEAVERS

The information on the comb makers, carpenters, and hand loom weavers' national conventions is meagre. The comb makers held a delegate convention in 1836, but only their address "to their brethren throughout the United States" is preserved.[63] They recited a moderate improvement through the organisation of societies, but regretted that their "brethren of the more Eastern States" had not joined them in convention. They urged "a regular correspondence between the different societies" and a "uniformity of prices."

In 1836 the Journeymen House Carpenters held a convention in Philadelphia on the same days as that of the National Trades' Union.[64] Delegates were present from Albany, Pitts-

61 Stewart, *Documentary History of Early Organizations of Printers*, 915, 916.

62 Notice, "Meeting Postponed," Aug. 10, 1838, in *Ibid.*, 916.

63 *National Laborer*, Sept. 10, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 332 *et seq.*

64 *National Laborer*, Oct. 15, and Nov. 19, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 336 *et seq.*

burgh, Baltimore, Washington, and Philadelphia. They appointed a committee to draft a constitution and to report at the next convention in Baltimore, April, 1837. It is not known whether this convention was held. They adopted an address and resolutions on the ten-hour system, "uniformity of prices throughout the different towns, villages, and cities in the United States," the formation of local societies, and "correspondence one with another."

The hand loom weavers held a convention at the same time and place with the carpenters. Its object was "to arrive at a clear knowledge where to fix the standards of prices to be paid for the various fabrics of Hand Loom Weaving throughout the United States," and also "to investigate the evils which affect our trade; whether they result from foreign or home competition or from the product of the power loom." [65] The proceedings of this convention have not been found.

The first consideration in each of these attempts to establish a national union, with the exception of that of the printers, was the standardisation of wages. The object of the printers was to standardise the qualifications of journeymen and thus indirectly to regulate wages. The competitive area for manufactures was, however, not yet truly national, neither was it any longer merely local. It was bounded by the Alleghenies and the Atlantic. But even within this area the attempts to organise on more than a local scale were feeble, and, indeed, it may be said that to the sudden and oppressive rise of prices and speculation in the decade of the thirties was due the premature nationalisation of trade unions, fully thirty years in advance of a completed national market.

65 *National Trades' Union*, Feb. 13, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 341, 342.

CHAPTER VI

DISINTEGRATION

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PANIC AND DEPRESSION

By the beginning of 1837 the speculative mania had run its course. Since 1834, 194 new banks had been started and the circulation had increased by about $60,000,000.[1] The sales of public lands had grown from less than $5,000,000 in 1834 to nearly $25,000,000 in 1836.[2] Hundreds of miles of canals and railroads had been pushed forward at hitherto unheard-of expense. "The success of the Erie Canal gave a great stimulus to the building of artificial waterways throughout the Northern States both east and west of the Alleghenies, and before 1837 more than $100,000,000 was invested in various canals."[3] From 1834 to 1836 imports exceeded exports by $111,703,519.[4] But the imports of specie and bullion also outran the amount exported by $31,575,272.[5] Foreign investments in American securities offset the balance of trade. The whole finally collapsed in the panic of 1837.[6]

The first shock the country received was when the presi-

1 See I, 348 *et seq.*

2 U. S. *Reports on the Finances*, 1829–1836, p. 627; 1837–1844, 89.

3 Johnson, Van Metre, Huebner, and Hanchett, *History of Domestic and Foreign Commerce*, I, 227. (Carnegie Institution Publications 1915).

4 *Reports on the Finances*, 1837–1844, pp. 275, 285.

5 *Ibid.*, 276, 277, 286, 287.

6 For discussion of panic, see Bogart, *Economic History of the United States*, 194–195, 219–222; Coman, *The Industrial History of the United States*, 198–201; Dewey, *Financial History of the United States*, 224–231; McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, VI, 389–420, 523–532, 623–628.

dent on July 11, 1836, issued the famous "Specie Circular" ordering land agents selling public land to take only specie. The next shock came from the panic that gripped England at this time making it necessary for her to call upon Americans to meet their obligations. And still a third from the South which could not dispose of its cotton owing to conditions in England. During the speculative years the cotton planters had increased their acreage and mortgaged the growing crop to buy slaves and cotton gins. As if to make matters worse the wheat crop of 1836 failed through the ravages of the Hessian fly in Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and Tennessee. This misfortune made it necessary for the states in the following year to import breadstuffs from the Mediterranean countries.

The cotton houses in the South were the first to break. Northern manufactories and warehouses followed. Finally the banks collapsed. On May 10, all but three banks in New York suspended specie payment. On the eleventh Albany, Hartford, New Haven, Providence, and Philadelphia banks suspended, on the fifteenth Washington, on the seventeenth Charleston and Cincinnati, on the eighteenth North Carolina State Bank, and on the nineteenth Savannah and Augusta. In all, 618 banks failed during the year 1837.

The disaster was so overwhelming that it was not until 1842 that the country was able to lift its head from under the wreck. In 1838 the banks resumed specie payment only to suspend again in the following year. Specie payment restored confidence in American business quarters, and speculation again became brisk. But conditions in England were not conducive to continued prosperity here. Her crop had failed in 1838, a situation which made it necessary for her to import grain from the continent. This drained her of specie, and to replenish her supply she turned to America which was indebted to her. To save themselves the banks here suspended in October, 1839.

Early in 1841 they resumed specie payment, but suspended again soon after. This time the Bank of the United States, now a Pennsylvania corporation, was to blame. It was heavily indebted in Europe and its credit there was shaken. As soon

as it opened in 1841 a run upon it began which forced it finally to close its doors on February 4. In its demise it brought down all other banks in Philadelphia save two. Those in New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Richmond suspended soon after. It was not until March 18, 1842, five years after the first crash, that the banks definitely resumed specie payment.

With the first descent of the panic in 1837, the labour movement was crushed out of existence. The local societies, the city assemblies, the national federation of assemblies and locals, and the national trade unions disappeared. With them went their official organs, the newspapers they had started for purposes of agitation and for carrying news of interest to their members. Indeed, the loss of these newspapers leaves the period 1837 to 1839 in comparative obscurity. The New York City assembly disappeared in the confusion that followed the trial of the tailors of that city for conspiracy, the Philadelphia assembly lingered on until 1838, in the hope of solving its problem in co-operation, and the other eleven assemblies disappeared meanwhile. Notices of meetings for both the national federation, and some of the national trade unions appeared in 1837, but there is no evidence that meetings were actually held.

Some of the stronger locals of which friendly papers took notice continued to live and were desperate in the attempt to maintain wages. The Philadelphia cordwainers working on men's shoes, at a special meeting, adopted resolutions denying a report that was circulated by the "enemies" of the society, "that owing to the present state of what is termed the 'money market,' the Society from necessity would be compelled to reduce their present bill of wages."[7] Likewise the cordwainers working on ladies' shoes, whose society numbered 800 in its membership, issued a statement declaring that the boot and shoe manufacturers of Philadelphia had attacked their bill of prices and had discharged the men in their employ, nevertheless they would maintain prices "at all hazards."[8] In New York city the printers issued an address to their "Fellow Craftsmen" spiriting them on to stay by the union and to resist a reduction in wages. "If there yet remains," declared

[7] *Pennsylvanian*, Apr. 29, 1837. [8] *Public Ledger*, May 4, 1837.

the address, "one spark of the courage, manhood and determination which sustained you when forming the present scale of prices, let the employing printers of N. Y. and the United States, see that it still exists, and can be easily fanned to a flame; let them see that the insignificant and paltry pittance which you now obtain for your support shall not be reduced at their pleasure — that for them to grow richer you will not consent to become poorer." The address closed with an appeal that the union be supported. The attempt to cut wages is due to the rumoured want of union spirit. "Support the association," it said, "and the association will support you." [9]

The cutting of wages, however, was not all. Labour suffered far more from utter lack of employment. Katharine Coman states that with the beginning of the panic thousands of men were thrown out of employment.[10] In New York City alone, it was said, in 1837, that "6,000 masons and carpenters and other workmen connected with building, have been discharged." [11] But reports came in from all directions announcing suspension of business. From Dover, Massachusetts, came the report that a mill there closed its doors throwing "200 females and 40 males" out of employment.[12] The *Miners' Journal* announced that the mining establishments in Pennsylvania "will be obliged to dismiss a portion of their hands." [13] "The streets of New Bedford," said one report, "are now thronged with seamen out of employment. Forty whale ships are lying at the wharves, but nothing doing to fit them out for sea." [14] Another report from Haverhill, Massachusetts, announced "the almost entire failure of the shoe business in this vicinity." "It was the resource of almost every family," it said, "men, women and children were engaged, and many have no other means of obtaining their daily bread. Should the present state of things continue long, it must produce many cases of extreme suffering." [15]

An instance of the distress into which labour was thrown is found in the appeal of the Fairmount Dorcas Society on behalf

9 New York *Evening Post*, June 29, 1837.
10 *The Industrial History of the United States*, 231.
11 New York *Star*, reprinted in *Public Ledger*, Apr. 15, 1837.
12 *Ibid.*, May 1, 1837.
13 Cited in *Ibid.*, May 5, 1837.
14 *Ibid.*, May 13, 1837.
15 *Haverhill Gazette*, reprinted in *Public Ledger*, May 20, 1837.

of the Schuylkill dock labourers. Their suffering, the appeal said, is ordinarily great during the winter months when the coal trade is suspended, owing to lack of employment, but "their suffering this winter, as also the suffering of many families whose children (owing to the suspension of all business in many of the factories) were thrown out of employ during the summer months, will be severe in the extreme." In a postscript the society solicited donations for their relief.[16]

EQUAL RIGHTS AND POLITICS

While gloom pervaded most business quarters, and unemployment and distress were wide-spread, the woringmen turned to politics to better their lot. Trade unionism, which had for its object shorter hours, higher wages, and trade regulations, was of no avail at a time when business was suspended. Moreover, workingmen believed that the large number of corporations which had been created in recent years were responsible for the panic. These could be reached only through legislation. In New York State while not a single corporation had been chartered in the legislative session of 1785, and only 2 in 1795, 30 were chartered in 1805, 23 in 1815, 62 in 1825, 48 in 1835, and 173 in 1836.[17] But in addition to the rapidly growing number these institutions were also changing in character. While the earlier corporations were mostly charitable and educational organisations, and numbers of turnpike companies had been incorporated, the later corporations were more industrial in their nature. Thus out of the 30 charters issued in 1805, 18 went to turnpike companies, 6 to bridge companies, 4 to charitable and educational organisations, 1 to a bank, and 1 to an insurance company. Of the 173 charters issued in 1836, however, 13 went to turnpike companies, 11 to bridge companies, 20 to educational institutions, 45 to insurance companies, 42 to railroads, 13 to manufacturing companies, 13 to banks, and 16 to various organisations including water, gas, and coal companies.

There was something about corporations that was odious to

16 *Ibid.*, Jan. 1, 1838.

17 *Laws* of the State of New York, Eighth Session, 1785, Eighteenth, 1795, Twenty-eighth, 1805, Thirty-eighth, 1815, Forty-eighth, 1825, Fifty-eighth, 1835, Fifty-ninth, 1836.

the workingmen. They usually represented huge wealth, had a continuous life and limited liability, were monopolistic in character, induced speculation, and were decidedly anti-democratic. This was before the days of the general incorporation laws. Banks were especially obnoxious. They raised the cost of living and at the same time scaled wages.[18] Employers paid their men in notes at par which they could pass on often only at a discount. "Yet great as this wickedness is," said the *Public Ledger,* "men may be found in this city (Philadelphia) who perpetrate it habitually, and thus gain hundreds of dollars yearly. In receiving dues, they insist upon *Philadelphia money,* or upon the *discount* on *foreign money,* and having pocketed the *discount,* they pay the foreign money to their labourers at *par.* If they borrow money of a Philadelphia bank, to pay their labourers, they first exchange it at a broker's shop, for foreign money, and they employ a broker regularly to collect foreign money for their labourers." [19]

During the entire trade union period the workingmen, together with the master mechanics and small tradesmen who also felt the sting of corporations and banks, had agitated against these so-called monopolies. Both voted with the Democratic party which traditionally was an anti-monopoly party. The fight which Jackson led on the United States Bank was the latest glorious example. The local democracy, however, was not always true to faith and very often was corrupt. It broke its promises, some of its members accepted bribes and supported charters. It was here that the workingmen and small business men combined to run opposition candidates.

In Pennsylvania in 1835, they supported Congressman Henry A. Muhlenberg for governor as opposed to Governor George Wolf who was a candidate for re-election but who had proven himself a monopoly man. While the election of delegates to the state convention was going on, the workingmen met in "Town Meeting" and appointed a Committee of Superintendence to enquire of the two candidates their position on questions of interest to them — the banking system, education, revision of the state constitution, prison labour, the militia system, imprisonment for debt, and the use of English common

18 See above, I, 348 *et seq.*

19 *Public Ledger,* Feb. 23, 1839.

law in American courts.[20] Governor George Wolf at first evaded an answer and later gave what was to workingmen an elusive one. Congressman Muhlenberg, however, replied promptly and to their satisfaction. "I am opposed," he said, "to the present or any other National Bank, and unless convinced by experience that I am in error, I shall so continue. . . . Gradually, I should presume the number of State Banks might advantageously be diminished and restricted from issuing notes of a less denomination than 10 dollars, and at a later period, of less than 20 dollars." As to education he thought it was "the best and perhaps the only foundation upon which our glorious free institutions can rest." On constitutional reform, he suggested, that it would be to the benefit of the public if the greater number of the officers now appointed by the governor should be elected. Prison labour, he said, "should certainly not be used to injure the honest mechanic," imprisonment for debt "is justly considered odious," the militia system requires "a radical change," and the English common law ought only to be used in the absence of statute law and where it agrees with the customs of this country. On the whole, he found the workingmen's principles democratic and could not therefore, "but approve of them." [21]

When the convention met at Harrisburg on March 4, 1835, it was sufficiently divided between Wolf and Muhlenberg to block a nomination. It sat three days, wrangled over disputed delegates, and finally adjourned to meet again at Lewiston, May 6. The Wolf men, however, remained over and on the following day, when the other had left, went into session again, admitted the disputed delegates, filled in the ranks of those who had gone home and nominated Wolf.[22]

The report of what had happened at Harrisburg only kindled the zeal of the opposition. The *Pennsylvanian* which spoke on behalf of Muhlenberg was certain that the "people will assemble in convention at Lewiston, and speak in a voice of thunder. Muhlenberg will be there nominated . . . and will be elected by a triumphant majority." [23] The mechanics and workingmen "at a very numerous meeting" resolved that

20 *Pennsylvanian*, Apr. 3, 1835.
21 *Ibid.*
22 *Niles' Register*, Mar. 14 and 28, 1835.
23 *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 9, 1835.

George Wolf was no longer entitled to their support, but that Henry A. Muhlenberg would receive it, "provided he is nominated at the Lewiston Convention; his answer to the committee appointed on the 1st of January being decided, patriotic and satisfactory." [24] On May 6, 124 delegates met at Lewiston and unanimously nominated Muhlenberg.[25]

In Philadelphia, with Muhlenberg, an entire ticket was placed in the field embracing candidates for state, county, and city offices. William English, president of the Philadelphia Trades' Union during the March term of 1835, and for that same term in 1836, and Thomas Hogan, president of the same organisation during the September terms of the two years, were candidates for the Senate and Assembly respectively. The whole ticket, however, met with defeat. In the city Muhlenberg received 1,351 votes as compared with 1,801 for Wolf, and 5,402 votes for Ritner, the Whig candidate. The other candidates were defeated in the same ratio to the Ritner candidates, but ran only about 150 votes behind the Wolf candidates.[26] In the State, from the returns of all counties but 2, Muhlenberg received 37,826 votes, Wolf 61,856, and Ritner 91,861.[27]

In New York, too, in this year, 1835, the anti-monopolists broke with Tammany. During the trade union period they supported it, and in return some of their men were elected to office. Ely Moore, president of the General Trades' Union of New York, and president of the National Trades' Union, was elected to Congress in 1834 on its ticket. Nevertheless they writhed under its rule. Tammany not only did not keep its pledges with them, but was corrupt in its practices. An investigation in 1833 showed how the founders of the Seventh Ward Bank had distributed thousands of shares among over 100 state and city officials, including every Tammany senator.[28] George H. Evans, editor of the *Working Man's Advocate* and *The Man,* and William Leggett and William Cullen Bryant of the *Evening Post,* agitated against it, and finally in 1835,

24 *Ibid.*, Apr. 28, 1835.
25 *Niles' Register*, May 16, 1835.
26 *Radical Reformer and Working Man's Advocate*, Oct. 17, 1835, from the *Pennsylvanian.*
27 *Niles' Register*, Oct. 31, 1835.
28 Myers, *The History of Tammany Hall*, 115.

when it refused to pledge its candidates for Congress and the legislature against monopolies, the anti-monopolists bolted. At a separate meeting they concluded to strike off five of the candidates from the Tammany ticket and substitute their own.[29]

At this time it was the practice to submit the names of candidates nominated by committees, at a public meeting. To such a meeting called for October 29, at Tammany Hall, both sides came, and the struggle that ensued gave to the party that grew out of this meeting the name Loco-Foco.[30] The platform had to do mainly with opposition to monopolies and banks. However, a union was effected with the workingmen who had been aroused by the tailors' conspiracy case, and thus was formed the Equal Rights Party of the State of New York.[31]

The workingmen thus carried the organisation beyond the county lines. Through a committee they issued an "Address to the Mechanics and Working Men of the State of New York" calling upon them to elect delegates. In it, they declared against "chartered combinations," prison labour, "forced constructions of the statutes" in court decisions and reliance on precedence of British courts, and appealed for an independent party. "Fellow Mechanics and workingmen," said the address, "our greatest misfortune is that our interests have never been adequately represented in our publick councils. In a democratick representative government, the different classes of the community should have their due portion of representation. Hitherto our laws have been made and administered by men whose situations in life, and associations of mind, forbid any . . . identification of interest with the labouring mechanick or workingman, consequently a course of legislation has been pursued giving undue privileges and interest to wealth and credit, and placing the working people at the mercy of capitalists and speculators." "We complain," it went on to say, "that the leaders and the aristocracy of both the great political parties of this state . . . have deceived the workingmen by false pretences of political honesty and justice. However the movers of

29 Byrdsall, *The History of the Loco-Foco or Equal Rights Party*, 21. Byrdsall was secretary of the party during the greater part of its life and recorded in this book its history, and as he stated, "its movements, conventions and proceedings, with short characteristic sketches of its prominent men."

30 *Ibid.*, 23–26; *Niles' Register*, Nov. 7, 1835; April 23, 1836.

31 See above, I, 408 *et seq.*

both parties may contend against each other for power and place, and however unwilling they may be to share the spoils of office with one another, yet they always unite when the people are to be crushed, or despoiled of their rights, and when the spoils of partial legislation are to be obtained." [32]

On September 15, ninety-three delegates from different parts of the State met and unanimously resolved to institute a political party "separate and distinct from all existing parties or factions in this state," and named it the Equal Rights Party.[33] A "Declaration of Rights" was drawn up, not unlike that which the county organisation issued, and a motion adopted to adhere to the party "until all the people realise the Equality of Rights."

When the delegates returned to New York City the local organisation approved all they did and adopted the platform formulated at the convention. In addition to the nominees for governor and lieutenant-governor they placed a full quota of candidates for county, state, and national offices. In some instances, however, they endorsed the Whig candidates and thus formed a combination against Tammany.

The result was gratifying to the workingmen. Out of 4 candidates for Congress, Tammany elected only 2, 1 of whom was Ely Moore, who received the workingmen's votes. Out of 13 candidates for the State Assembly, it elected only 6. Of the remaining 7, 1 tied with a Whig candidate, 4 were defeated by Whigs, and 2 by Equal Rights men — Clinton Roosevelt and Robert Townsend, Jr. The Whigs also elected with the aid of the Equal Rights votes the state senator and county register. Although its own candidate for governor was badly defeated, receiving in the city of New York about 1,400 votes of a total of 33,000, the Equal Rights party, where it combined with the Whigs cut deeply into the Tammany stronghold.[34]

The hard winter of 1836 and 1837, brought about, partly, by the failure of the crop in the preceding summer, and partly by high prices, led to a series of anti-monopoly demon-

[32] New York *Evening Post*, July 23, 1836.

[33] Byrdsall, *The History of the Loco-Foco or Equal Rights Party*, 67, 68.

[34] *Ibid.*, 89, 94; *Niles' Weekly Register*, Nov. 19, 1836.

strations on the part of the Equal Rights party. In answer to a "bread, meat, rent, and fuel" meeting called by it, for February 13, "a dense multitude of many thousand" gathered in the park in front of the city hall. Speeches were delivered and a resolution adopted "that the true remedy for the people, which will reduce the price of all the necessaries of life is, that every workingman refuse paper money in payment for his services, or demand specie of the banks for all notes paid to him." When the meeting was about over a stream of people came down Chatham Street and entered the park. A man mounted the platform, attacked the flour dealers, and added "go to the flour stores and offer a fair price, and if refused, take the flour." Some one just then cried out "Hart's flour store." The multitude broke up and a large part of it swarmed down Washington street to Eli Hart & Company. The mayor and police appeared but were driven from the scene and the warehouse ransacked. Fifty-three arrests were made and although it was proven that not one of the persons arrested belonged to the Equal Rights party, the hostile press attacked it as being responsible for the riot.[35]

In defiance of all the abuse heaped upon it, the party still continued to hold its open air meetings in the park.[36] When on May 10, the banks suspended specie payment, and the legislature soon afterwards legalised the suspension, it held a public meeting and condemned the act. Resolutions were passed declaring it *ex post facto* legislation and therefore unconstitutional. Fiery statements were again made against banks and paper money, the President was endorsed "in his adhesion to the law requiring payments of the revenue in specie," and the proceedings of the meeting ordered to be transmitted to the governor with a request that he call a special session of the legislature to repeal the suspension act. At the same time the party decided to hold another state convention at Utica, in the following September.[37]

The real achievement of the party, however, was the defeat of Tammany in the city elections in the spring of 1837. It placed a full ticket in the field and, although its candidate for

[35] Byrdsall, *The History of the Loco-Foco or Equal Rights Party*, 99–106, 107, 108.

[36] *Ibid.*, 109, 111–113, 135–137, 140–142.

[37] *Ibid.*, 146–152.

mayor received only 4,044 votes, enough were drawn from the Tammany candidate to defeat him.

This was the highest point in the life of the party. It not only defeated Tammany, but itself began to decline soon afterwards. The state convention at Utica in September was poorly attended, owing, it was said, to the failure of the central committee of correspondence to notify the several counties of the meeting, and owing to a wrong date finding its way into the papers which misled the delegates. Moreover, Tammany, which hitherto remained oblivious, now became sensitive to what was going on about it. The more radical element realised that if it was to stay in power it must not antagonise the labour vote and showed its friendliness to Van Buren's plans for an Independent Treasury, which the Loco-Focos had already endorsed.

The Equal Rights party now felt that it had won Tammany to its principles. The approaching fall election provided the opportunity to join ranks again. Tammany placed five of the Loco-Foco candidates for the state assembly already in the field, on its own ticket, and a Loco-Foco committee appointed to discuss the question of union with a like Tammany committee reported that the party "at Tammany Hall had given evidence of their disposition to unite with us in sustaining the administration;" that it had made a ticket composed of men "politically and morally satisfactory;" and that it had "adopted a Declaration of Rights essentially the same as our own." The same committee also recommended that the Equal Rights candidates not nominated by Tammany withdraw. The report and recommendation were adopted.

Tammany thus ousted the arisocratic banking element and began its modern career of organising the labour vote.[38]

The news that the workingmen in New York had gone into politics was warmly received by their kind in different sections of the country. The tendency was away from trade unionism. At Washington the "citizens of the Navy Yard" approved of "the stand taken by the workingmen of the city of New York, for the purpose of forming an independent party," and appointed a committee to prepare an effigy of Judge

[38] Myers, *The History of Tammany Hall*, 132–137.

Edwards for execution on July 4, "after which in full mourning the workingmen will march to solemn music through the streets of the city, as at the burial of liberty." [39] In Albany a friendly paper, the Albany *Microscope,* commented on the double dealings of politicians before and after election and declared that mechanics "must take their cases into their own hands." "They see the hypocrisy, cunning and double dealings of the monopolists, and they have the power, thank God! to protect themselves. Their united votes at any contest, will seal the death warrant or ensure the victory of any party whose cause they espouse." [40]

In the West a similar sentiment was expressed. At a Fourth of July celebration, held by the Pittsburgh Trades' Union in 1836, the orator of the day pointed to the growth of classes in this country. Great wealth, he said, was the cause of it. But great wealth did more than that; it corrupted legislation, gave security to the monopolists, and perverted the judiciary. The remedy was the ballot-box. "Trades' Unions and Associations for the benefit of the Working Men," he said, "are good, so far as they go. They will at least ameliorate the effects of a bad state of society, but they are not adequate to the removal of the causes of oppression. This removal must be accomplished by the ballot-boxes." [41]

CO-OPERATION

While in most places the workingmen were going into politics, the workingmen in Philadelphia were going into co-operation. Instances of co-operation during the period of prosperity, are not lacking in any part of the country. These usually grew out of differences with employers which the workingmen were unable to adjust to their satisfaction. Thus the New York carpenters during a strike in 1833, proposed to go into business for themselves.[42] The Cincinnati tailors in December, 1835, threatened their masters with "Union Shops" should they not grant their demands,[43] and the St. Louis tail-

39 *Washingtonian*, June 23, 1836.
40 Reprinted in the *National Laborer*, June 25, 1836.
41 *Ibid.*, Aug. 6, 1836.
42 *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer*, June 9, 1833. *Literary Register*, Dec. 18, 1835.
43 *Commercial Bulletin and Missouri*

ors, about this time, opened a co-operative shop and continued to run it until spring when their price list was accepted.[44] In New Brunswick, New Jersey, in 1836, when the master cordwainers "not only discharged the Journeymen, but pledged themselves not to employ any one belonging to the Trade Society," the Union Benevolent and Trade Society of Journeymen Cordwainers opened a shop of its own.[45]

But these were isolated attempts and it was not until the end of 1836, that the entire trade union movement in Philadelphia swung to co-operation. The cabinet-makers had opened a ware-room for the sale of furniture in 1834, and in 1836 had one of the largest furniture stores in the city.[46] The cordwainers working on ladies' shoes struck for higher wages on March 21. Three months later they opened a co-operative "manufactory of their own" as "a striking evidence that they have become acquainted with the only means of securing a just reward for their labour."[47] The hand loom weavers in the suburbs of Philadelphia, Moyamensing, and Kensington, started co-operative associations in May and August respectively.[48] In November those of Philadelphia were said to have two "co-operative manufactories," and upon an attempt of the employers to reduce wages they determined that they would open a third.[49] About the same time the tailors,[50] hatters,[51] and saddlers[52] were preparing to open co-operative shops.

The *National Laborer,* the official paper of the Trades' Union, now began to discuss the question in its columns and "the friends of co-operation" held public meetings "to adopt measures beneficial to the working community."[53] The *National Laborer* urged the Trades' Union itself to foster co-operation. It proposed that each society raise a fund through weekly or monthly contributions to go into business for itself. At the same time each society should contribute 10 cents monthly to the Union. The fund thus raised should be used

44 *Ibid.*, Dec. 9, 21, 1835, Jan. 18, Feb. 5, 12 and 17, Mar. 16, Apr. 18, May 30, and June 10, 1836.

45 *National Laborer*, Apr. 16, 1836.

46 *Public Ledger*, June 11, 1836; *National Laborer*, Nov. 26, 1836.

47 *Ibid.*, June 9, 1836; *National Laborer*, June 11, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, V, 361–368.

48 *National Laborer*, May 7, Aug. 6, 1836.

49 *Ibid.*, Nov. 26, 1836.

50 *Ibid.*, Sept. 17, 1836, Feb. 4, and Mar. 11, 1837.

51 *Ibid.*, Nov. 26, 1836

52 *Ibid.*

53 *Public Ledger*, Sept. 30 and Nov. 29, 1836.

in helping societies to start co-operatives, to insure them against loss, and to found schools for the education of apprentices or children of members. In ten years, it was estimated, the fund would amount to $120,000.[54]

The Union was convinced. On November 15, it adopted a resolution "that a committee be appointed with instructions to place in the Constitution a clause allowing the funds of the Union to be loaned to the Societies for the purpose of Co-operation."[55] Commenting upon this step, the *National Laborer* said, "Several months have elapsed since this resolution was proposed in the convention, during which time thousands of dollars have been expended — for what? For a just and noble purpose truly, but sadly failing in effecting half the good which would have resulted from a better application."[56]

As the amendment to the constitution required the sanction of the societies, the *National Laborer* undertook a campaign in its behalf. It proposed that each society appoint a committee consisting "of those who are in favour, and those who are opposed" to meet in "a general conference," in "a conversation meeting," where the subject "may be calmly and deliberately discussed." But it added the warning that the Union should not be neglected, otherwise all is lost. "You can look nowhere for aid in case of embarrassment, but to your fellow-labourers." Therefore rally all around the Union —"increase its fund — strive to keep within its guardian arm every Society and every member, and in your hour of need or trouble, there it will stand, firm as a rock, a guide to your path, and a watch-tower to light you onward to success and prosperity."[57]

A series of conferences were accordingly held early in 1837. At one meeting in February about 200 delegates were present, representing almost all the societies composing the Union. "The question," said the *National Laborer,* "was debated with much zeal and judgment; all acknowledged its utility, but its practicability was doubted by a few."[58] At a later meeting a committee, consisting of one delegate from each society, was authorised to draft plans and submit them to the convention for

54 *National Laborer*, Nov. 5, 1836.
55 *Ibid.*, Nov. 19, 1836.
56 *Ibid.*
57 *Ibid.*, Nov. 26, 1836; *Doc. Hist.*, VI, 58 *et seq.*
58 *Ibid.*, Feb. 11, 1837; *Doc. Hist.*, VI. 62.

discussion,[59] and in March the following resolutions were adopted: "Resolved, that the delegates from each of the Societies represented in this conference cause to be laid before the next meeting a written statement, showing therein the cost of the raw materials necessary for the employment of ten working persons for one week in each of their respective trades or associations. Showing also in said statement the price paid to the efficient operative and the profits accruing on the sale of such article or articles when sold at the market price." [60] But these conferences were thwarted by the panic.

EDUCATION

After all else had failed the workingmen put their final hopes in education. They now wanted to organise trade associations, not to protect their trades, but, first of all, to improve their "moral and intellectual condition."

This was true, at least, in Philadelphia in 1839, after the panic had held sway almost two years. At a meeting of delegates representing the cordwainers, coach makers, tailors, framework knitters, oak coopers, brush makers, carpenters, silver platers, and cedar coopers' societies a resolution was passed "to hold a general Convention of the various Trade Societies of the city and county of Philadelphia" on Monday evening, January 7, 1839, at the Exchange Hotel, Bank street. All trade societies were asked to attend, and such "branches of mechanics" as were not organised, were asked to hold meetings and send delegates. A general invitation was also extended to "persons *not* delegates from Societies or Associations, but who are *favourably disposed* to advance the interests of the efficient operative mechanic and artist." [61]

Under the general invitation a number of employer-politicians came, with the intention of turning the convention into politics, but were excluded from the meeting. "What, sir, was my astonishment and chagrin," wrote one of the excluded, "when I saw by the proceedings of the persons . . . that we were not entitled to 'participate in the proceedings of the Convention.' The narrow minded policy at present pursued by those calling

[59] *Public Ledger*, Feb. 14, 1837.
[60] *Ibid.*, Mar. 25, 1837.
[61] *Ibid.*, Nov. 24, 1835, and Jan. 10, 1839.

themselves workingmen, is the rock upon which the late Trades' Union foundered, and which must destroy every union that may hereafter be formed." This must follow since, according to the logic of the convention, "no Working Man, can, the moment he betters his conditions by applying to himself the fruits of his own toil, be any longer a friend to those he happened to leave behind him in the race of self-preferment." The true interests of the workingmen is to win every man "without distinction of grade or caste," for it is only by making their association a "Trades' *Political* Union," and by resolving, without any regard to "*the dictates of the present party hacks,*" to place no man in nomination for public office "unless he identify his acts with those of the 'bone and sinew of the land,'" that they can gain any advantage from association.[62]

The convention met for the first time on January 7, 1839, with eighty delegates present, and adjourned *sine die* on February 26.[63] Henry F. Scott was president, and Joseph D. Miller and Thomas O'Neill secretaries, of the convention. William Gilmore, president of the Trades' Union of Pennsylvania in 1833, was a prominent figure at these sessions as well as others who had taken an active part in the Philadelphia Trades' Union. The chief question discussed at these meetings was "the formation of Trade Associations for the improvement of the moral and intellectual condition of the Mechanics."

During the month of January the convention sat weekly and, beginning with February 7, semi-weekly, to facilitate business. Finally, on February 22, the following resolutions were adopted: that associations be formed "in every branch of mechanism" and that the societies already in existence take "immediate and active measures to carry out fully the objects of their organisation; that "united Trade Societies and Associations" be formed; that a "literary and scientific Institute for the diffusion of useful knowledge be organised and that the Institute be immediately established by "adopting the 'Mechanics' Library' incorporated in 1829;" and that a "Mechanics' Hall" be erected "with Reading, Library, Debating and Lecture Rooms." Resolutions were also adopted recommending "the

62 *Ibid.*, Jan. 10, 1839.
63 *Ibid.*, Nov. 24, 1838, and Jan. 9, 1839.

formation of Associations throughout the United States." The first step taken to carry out its programme, was the appointment of a committee to draft "an address to the Mechanics of the City and County." [64]

[64] *Ibid.*, Feb. 18 and 26, 1839.

APPENDICES TO PART THREE

I—FIRST DATES ON WHICH TRADE SOCIETIES APPEARED IN NEW YORK, BALTIMORE, PHILADELPHIA, AND BOSTON

1833–1837

New York

Independent Journeymen House Carpenters, *Courier & Enquirer* (N. Y.), May 13, 1833.

Printers, *Courier & Enquirer,* May 21, 1833.

Journeymen Cabinetmakers, *Courier & Enquirer,* May 23, 1833.

Journeymen Morocco Dressers, *Courier & Enquirer,* May 24, 1833.

Journeymen Masons, *Courier & Enquirer,* May 24, 1833.

Journeymen Book Binders, *Courier & Enquirer,* May 25, 1833.

Journeymen Stonecutters, *Courier & Enquirer,* May 27, 1833.

Journeymen House Painters, *Courier & Enquirer,* May 27, 1833.

Ship Joiners, *Courier & Enquirer,* May 28, 1833.

Brush Makers, *Courier & Enquirer,* May 30, 1833.

Journeymen Tailors, *Courier & Enquirer,* May 31, 1833.

Journeymen Hat Makers, *Courier & Enquirer,* May 31, 1833.

Jewelers, Watch-case Makers and Pencil-case Makers, *Courier & Enquirer,* June 5, 1833.

Gilders and Looking-glass Frame Makers, *Courier & Enquirer,* June 5, 1833.

Journeymen Sail Makers, *Courier & Enquirer,* June 5, 1833.

Blacksmiths and Machinists, *Courier & Enquirer,* June 6, 1833.

Coopers, *Courier & Enquirer,* July 26, 1833.

Bakers, *Courier & Enquirer,* July 26, 1833.

Journeymen Cordwainers (Men's Branch), *Courier & Enquirer,* July 26, 1833.

Journeymen Rope Makers, *Courier & Enquirer,* Sept. 27, 1833.

Carvers & Gilders, *Courier & Enquirer,* Dec. 3, 1833.

Silk Hatters, *Courier & Enquirer,* Dec. 3, 1833.

Cordwainers (Ladies' Branch), *Courier & Enquirer,* Dec. 3, 1833.

Tin Plate and Sheet Iron Workers, *Courier & Enquirer,* Dec. 3, 1833.

Type Founders, *Courier & Enquirer,* Dec. 3, 1833.
Hat Finishers, *Courier & Enquirer,* Dec. 3, 1833.
Willow Basket Makers, *Courier & Enquirer,* Dec. 3, 1833.
Chairmakers & Gilders, *Courier & Enquirer,* Dec. 3, 1833.
Block & Pump Makers, *Courier & Enquirer,* Dec. 3, 1833.

Baltimore

Journeymen Tailors, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* July 22, 1833.
Journeymen House Carpenters, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* July 24, 1833.
Journeymen Hatters, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* July 27, 1833.
Journeymen Cabinetmakers, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* July 27, 1833.
Journeymen Coopers, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* July 27, 1833.
Journeymen Bootmakers, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* July 27, 1833.
Copper, Tin Plate and Sheet Iron Workers, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* July 31, 1833.
Blacksmiths, Engineers, and Machinists, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* Aug. 19, 1833.
Journeymen Bricklayers, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* Aug. 19, 1833.
Journeymen Painters, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* Aug. 20, 1833.
Journeymen Coach Makers, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* Aug. 21, 1833.
Cordwainers of Ladies' Branch, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* Aug. 21, 1833.
Journeymen Comb Makers, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* Aug. 24, 1833.
Journeymen Cordwainers on Second Rate Shoes, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* Aug. 31, 1833.
Journeymen Chair Makers and Ornamental Painters, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* Sept. 5, 1833.
Journeymen Stonecutters (granite), Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* Sept. 5, 1833.
Journeymen Stonecutters (marble), Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* Sept. 5, 1833.
Printers, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* Sept. 5, 1833.
Tobacconists, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* Sept. 5, 1833.
Bakers, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* Sept. 12, 1833.
Tailoresses and Seamstresses, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser,* Oct. 3, 1833.

Philadelphia

Printers, *Pennsylvanian* (Philadelphia), Dec. 9, 1833.

New York

Brussels Carpet and Rug Weavers, *National Trades' Union*, (New York), Sept. 9, 1834.

Philadelphia

Journeymen Cabinetmakers, *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 4, 1834.
Journeymen Saddlers and Harness-makers, *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 8, 1834.
Journeymen Cordwainers (Men's Branch), *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 13, 1834.
Journeymen Tailors, *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 13, 1834.
Journeymen Carpenters, *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 13, 1834.
Journeymen Brushmakers, *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 13, 1834.
Schuylkill Falls Society,[1] *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 13, 1834.
Journeymen Cordwainers (Ladies' Branch), *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 13, 1834.
Blockley Society,[1] *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 13, 1834.
Haverford Society,[1] *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 13, 1834.
House Painters, *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 13, 1834.
Tobacconists, *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 13, 1834.
Journeymen Shell-Comb Makers, *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 13, 1834.
Moulders, *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 13, 1834.
Journeymen Hatters, *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 13, 1834.
Journeymen Stonecutters, *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 13, 1834.
Bookbinders, *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 13, 1834.
Journeymen Umbrella Makers, *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 13, 1834.
Leather Dressers, No. 1, *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 13, 1834.
Leather Dressers, No. 2, *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 13, 1834.

Boston

Curriers, *The Man* (*New York*), Mar. 12, 1834.
Cabinet and Pianoforte Makers, *The Man*, Mar. 12, 1834.
Tailors, *The Man*, Mar. 12, 1834.
Masons, *The Man*, Mar. 12, 1834.
Coopers, *The Man*, Mar. 12, 1834.
Shipwrights, *The Man*, Mar. 12, 1834.
Paper Makers, *The Man*, Mar. 12, 1834.
Painters, *The Man*, Mar. 12, 1834.
Iron-Founders, *The Man*, Mar. 12, 1834.
Printers, *The Man*, Mar. 12, 1834.
House Carpenters, *The Man*, Mar. 12, 1834.

1 Cotton factory operatives — men, women, and children, in towns in the vicinity of Philadelphia.

Sail Makers, *The Man,* March 12, 1834.
Machinists, *The Man,* Mar. 12, 1834.
Black and White Smiths, *The Man,* Mar. 12, 1834.
Stonecutters, *The Man,* May 13, 1835.
Plasterers, *Radical Reformer and Working Man's Advocate,* (Philadelphia), Aug. 8, 1835.

New York

Weavers, *National Trades' Union,* Feb. 7, 1835.
Leather Dressers, *National Trades' Union,* Mar. 20, 1835.
Curriers, *National Trades' Union,* Mar. 28, 1835.
Journeymen Locksmiths, *National Trades' Union,* May 16, 1835.
Saddlers, *National Trades' Union,* May 23, 1835.
Horseshoers, *National Trades' Union,* May 30, 1835.
Steam Boiler Makers, *National Trades' Union,* June 13, 1835.
Ladies' Shoebinders, *National Trades' Union,* June 20, 1835.
Female Bookbinders, *National Trades' Union,* July 4, 1835.
Hand Loom Weavers, *National Trades' Union,* Aug. 1, 1835.
Journeymen Tailors, *National Trades' Union,* Aug. 15, 1835.
Glass Cutters, *National Trades' Union,* Oct. 17, 1835.
Pianoforte Makers, *National Trades' Union,* Nov. 28, 1835.

Philadelphia

Hand Loom Cotton Weavers, No. 1, *Pennsylvanian,* May 15, 1835.
Plasterers, *Pennsylvanian,* June 8, 1835.
Journeymen Bricklayers, *Pennsylvanian,* June 9, 1835.
Journeymen Black and White Smiths, *Pennsylvanian,* June 12, 1835.
Journeymen Segar Makers, *Pennsylvanian,* June 20, 1835.
Journeymen Bakers, *Pennsylvanian,* June 20, 1835.
Journeymen Plumbers, *Pennsylvanian,* July 8, 1835.
Female Improvement Society, *Reformer and Working Man's Advocate* (Philadelphia), July 18, 1835.
Cordwainers, *Thatcher's Criminal Cases* (Boston, 1840), 617.

New York

Journeymen Umbrella Makers, *National Trades' Union,* Jan. 30, 1836.
Millwrights and Engineers, *Evening Post,* March 17, 1836.
Coach Makers, *Courier & Enquirer,* Mar. 21, 1836.
Varnishers and Polishers, *Courier & Enquirer,* Mar. 24, 1836.
Journeymen Upholsterers and Paper Hangers, *Courier & Enquirer,* Mar. 31, 1836.
Morocco Beamsmen, *National Trades' Union,* May 28, 1836.
United Riggers, *Courier & Enquirer,* Nov. 7, 1836.

Glass Workmen, *Public Ledger* (Philadelphia), Nov. 26, 1836.
Tailoresses and Seamstresses, New York *Evening Post*, Dec. 26, 1836.

Baltimore

Carpet Weavers, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser*, Feb. 26, 1836.
Hand Loom Weavers, Baltimore *Repub. & Com. Advertiser*, Apr. 26, 1836.

Philadelphia

Hand Loom Cotton Weavers, No. 2, *Pennsylvanian*, Feb. 12, 1836.
Journeymen Curriers, *Pennsylvanian*, Feb. 12, 1836.
Journeymen Glass Workers and Brass Finishers, *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 5, 1836.
Journeymen Biscuit Makers, *Pennsylvanian*, Mar. 12, 1836.
Brewery Laborers, *National Laborer* (Philadelphia), Apr. 2, 1836.
Journeymen Coopers, *Pennsylvanian*, April 8, 1836.
Whip and Cane Makers, *National Laborer*, Apr. 16, 1836.
Carpet and Ingrain Weavers, *National Laborer*, Apr. 25, 1836.
Fairmount Trade Association,[1] *National Laborer*, May 7, 1836.
Manayunk Trade Society,[1] *National Laborer*, May 14, 1836.
Day Labourers, *National Laborer*, May 14, 1836.
Chair Makers, *Pennsylvanian*, May 19, 1836.
Schuylkill Labourers, *National Laborer*, May 21, 1836.
Gilders, *National Laborer*, May 27, 1836.
Machinists and Millwrights, *National Laborer*, June 4, 1836.
Horseshoers, *National Laborer*, June 11, 1836.
Blacksmiths, *National Laborer*, June 11, 1836.
Paper Makers, *National Laborer*, June 11, 1836.
Cedar Coopers, *National Laborer*, June 18, 1836.
Coach Makers, Trimmers and Painters, *National Laborer*, June 18, 1836.
Dyers, *National Laborer*, June 18, 1836.
Soap Boilers and Tallow Chandlers, *National Laborer*, July 23, 1836.
Chester Creek Trade Association,[1] *National Laborer*, July 23, 1836.
Paper Stainers, *National Laborer*, Aug. 13, 1836.
Morristown Association,[1] *National Laborer*, Oct. 15, 1836.
Cotton Spinners, *National Laborer*, Oct. 15, 1836.
Silversmiths, *National Laborer*, Jan. 14, 1837.

1 Cotton factory operatives — men, women, and children, in towns in the vicinity of Philadelphia.

Philadelphia

Ship Joiners, *National Laborer,* Feb. 18, 1837.
Framework Knitters, *National Laborer,* Mar. 18, 1837.
Glass Cutters, *National Laborer,* Mar. 18, 1837.
Furriers, *National Laborer,* April 25, 1837.

II. STRIKES, 1833–1837.

YEAR	PLACE	TRADE	ISSUE	REFERENCE
1833	New York	Carpenters [1]	Higher wages	*Courier & Enquirer* (N. Y.), May 18, 1833.
		Tailors	" "	*N. Y. Journal of Commerce*, Oct. 12, 1833.
	Baltimore	Hatters	Red. in wages	*Balt. Repub. & Com. Advertiser*, July 27, 1833.
		Machinists	Ten-hour day	*Balt. Repub. & Com. Advertiser*, Aug. 19, 1833.
		Bricklayers [2]	" " "	*Balt. Repub. & Com. Advertiser*, Aug. 19, 1833.
		Coachmakers [2]	" " "	*Balt. Repub. & Com. Advertiser*, Aug. 21, 1833.
		Combmakers [2]	Higher wages	*Balt. Repub. & Com. Advertiser*, Aug. 24, 1833.
		Painters [2]	Ten-hour day	*Balt. Repub. & Com. Advertiser*, Aug. 27, 1833.
		Seamstresses	Higher wages	*Balt. Repub. & Com. Advertiser*, Oct. 2, 3, 1833.
	Washington	Carpenters	Ten-hour day	*National Trades' Union* (N. Y.), Aug. 20, 1834.
	Geneva, N. Y.	Cordwainers	Closed shop	14 Wendell's Report 10.
	Thompsonville, Conn.	Carpet Weavers	Higher wages	*Doc. Hist.*, IV, Supplement, 23–27, 116.
1834	Dover, N. H.	Cotton factory hands (female)	Red. in wages	*The Man* (N. Y.), Feb. 20, 1834.
	Blockley, Penn.	*Ibid.*	" " "	" " Apr. 15, 1834.
	Manayunk, Penn.	"	" " "	*Pennsylvanian*, May 9, 1834.
	New York	Bakers	Higher wages	*N. Y. Evening Post*, June 10, 1834.
		Cordwainers	Red. in wages	*Working Man's Advocate* (N. Y.), June 14, 1834.
		Sailors	" " "	*N. Y. Evening Post*, Aug. 24, 1834.
		Carpet Weavers	" " "	*National Trades' Union*, Sept. 6, 1834.

		Locksmiths	Red. in wages	*Working Man's Advocate* (N. Y.), Oct. 4, 1834.
		Hatters	" " "	*National Trades' Union*, Dec. 20, 1834.
	Woonsocket Falls	Cotton factory hands (female)	Higher wages	" " " Sept. 6, 1834.
	Washington	Cordwainers	Red. in wages	" " " Sept. 6, 1834.
	Philadelphia	Leather dressers	Red. in wages	*National Trades' Union*, Nov. 29, 1834.
1835	Brooklyn	Ropemakers	" " "	" " " Jan. 31, 1835.
		Masons	Higher wages	" " " Mar. 14, 1835.
	Washington	Printers	Apprenticeship	*The Man*, Apr. 1, 1835.
	New York	Cabinetmakers	Higher wages	*National Trades' Union*, Apr. 4, 1835.
		Cordwainers [1]	" "	" " " May 9, 1835.
		Stonecutters	" "	" " " " 16, 1835.
		Mechanics in Gov. arsenal	" "	" " " " 23, 1835.
		Ship carpenters	" "	" " " " 23, 1835.
		Saddlers	" "	" " " " 23, 1835.
		Horseshoers	" "	" " " " 30, 1835.
		Bookbinders (fem.)	" "	" " " July 10, 1835.
		Leather dressers	Red. in wages	" " " Aug. 1, 1835.
		Cordwainers (men's branch)	Higher wages	*N. Y. Evening Post*, Sept. 29, 1835.
		Glass cutters	" "	*National Trades' Union*, Oct. 17, 1835.
		Sail makers	Against increase in hours	" " " " 24, 1835.
	Hudson, N. Y.	Cordwainers	Closed shop	*Doc. Hist.*, IV, 277, *et seq.*
	Troy, N. Y.	Carpenters	Higher wages	*National Trades' Union*, Mar. 21, 1835.
		Masons	" "	" " " May 16, 1835.
		Coachmakers	Against use of apprentices	" " " Dec. 19, 1835.
	Charlestown, Mass.	Morocco dressers [2]	Higher wages	" " " May 9, 1835.
	Batavia, N. Y.	Mechanics [2]	Ten-hour day	" " " Apr. 25, 1835.
	Boston	Stonecutters	Ten-hour day	" " " May 9, 1835.

II. STRIKES, 1833–1837 — Continued.

YEAR	PLACE	TRADE	ISSUE	REFERENCE
1835	Boston	Masons	Ten-hour day	*National Trades' Union*, May 9, 1835.
		Carpenters	" " "	" " " " 9, 1835.
		Printers	Against employment of girls	*N. Y. Journal of Commerce*, Aug. 7, 1835.
		Plasterers	Ten-hour day	*National Trades' Union*, Aug. 8, 1835.
	Newark	Cordwainers	Higher wages	" " " May 30, 1835.
	New Brunswick, N. J.	Cordwainers	" "	" " " June 6, 1835.
		Carpenters & masons	Higher wages & ten-hour day	" " " July 4, 1835.
	Poughkeepsie, N. Y.	Cordwainers	Higher wages	" " " June 20, 1835.
		Carpenters	" "	" " " Jan. 2, 1835.
	Baltimore	Carpenters & bricklayers	Ten-hour day	*Balt. Repub. & Com. Adv.*, June 24, 1835.
		Millwrights [2]	Higher wages	" " " " June 25, 1835.
	Orange, N. J.	Cordwainers	" "	*National Trades' Union*, June 6, 1835.
		Shoe binders (fem.)	" "	" " " July 25, 1835.
	Paterson, N. J.	Cordwainers	" "	" " " June 27, 1835.
		Cotton factory hands	Eleven-hour day	" " " Aug. 8, 1835.
	Seneca Falls, N. Y.	Mechanics [2]	Ten-hour day	" " " July 4, 1835.
	Schenectady	Hatters	Higher wages	" " " July 25, 1835.
		Cordwainers	" "	" " " Oct. 3, 1835.
	Salem, Mass.	Cordwainers	" "	*Essex Register*, Aug. 17, 1835.
		Cabinetmakers	Higher wages & ten-hour day	" " Aug. 31, 1835.
	Steubenville, Ohio	Weavers	Higher wages	*Balt. Rep. & Com. Adv.*, Aug. 22, 1835.
	Cincinnati	Harnessmakers	" "	*National Trades' Union*, Sept. 5, 1835.
	Albany	Coachmakers [2]	Ten-hour day	" " " Sept. 19, 1835.

	Hartford, Conn.	Mechanics	Ten-hour day	*National Trades' Union*, Sept. 26, 1835.
	Philadelphia	Coal heavers	" " "	*Pennsylvanian*, June 4, 1835.
		Carpenters	" " "	" June 4, 1835.
		Hod carriers	" " "	*N. Y. Journal of Commerce*, June 8, 1835.
		Bricklayers	" " "	" " " " " June 8, 1835.
		Plasterers	" " "	" " " " " June 8, 1835.
		Cordwainers (men's branch) [1]	Higher wages	*Pennsylvanian*, June 11, 1835.
		Leather dressers	Ten-hour day	" June 11, 1835.
		Black and white smiths	" " "	" June 12, 1835.
		Seamen	" " "	" June 15, 1835.
		Carters [2]	Higher wages	" June 15, 1835.
		Cigar makers [1]	" "	" June 20, 1835.
		Cordwainers [1]	" "	" June 20, 1835.
		Bookbinders (fem.)	" "	*N. Y. Journal of Commerce*, June 23, 1835.
		Bakers	Against Sunday work	*Pennsylvanian*, June 26, 1835.
		Printers	Higher wages	" June 30, 1835.
		Plumbers	Ten-hour day	" July 8, 1835.
		Saddlers	Higher wages [1]	*N. Y. Evening Post*, Aug. 1, 1835.
		Stonecutters	Red. in wages	*Pennsylvanian*, Nov. 11, 1835.
		Handloom weavers	" " "	*National Trades' Union*, Nov. 14, 1835.
	Pottsville, Pa.	Boatmen		*American Sentinel* (Phila.), July 7, 1835.
	Pittsburgh	Cordwainers	Higher wages	*National Trades' Union*, Sept. 26, 1835.
1836	St. Louis	Tailors	" "	*Com. Bul. & Mo. Literary Reg.* (St. Louis), Dec. 9, 21, 1835, Feb. 5, 12, 17, 1836.
	Reading, Pa.	Cordwainers	" "	*National Trades' Union*, Jan. 9, 1836.
	Newark	Cordwainers	" "	" " " " Feb. 13, 1836.
		Second rate bookmakers	" "	" " " " Feb. 13, 1836.
		Boat fitters [2]	" "	" " " " Feb. 13, 1836.
		Hatters	" "	" " " " Mar. 19, 1836.
		Curriers	" "	" " " " Apr. 9, 1836.

II. STRIKES, 1833–1837 — Continued.

YEAR	PLACE	TRADE	ISSUE	REFERENCE
		Harnessmakers	Higher wages	*National Trades' Union*, Apr. 16, 1836.
1836	Chester Creek, Del.	Cotton factory hands		*Boston Courier*, Mar. 18, 1836.
	Paterson, N. J.	Carpenters [2]	Higher wages	*Public Ledger* (Phila.), Mar. 19, 1836.
	Poughkeepsie, N. Y.	Carpenters [2]	" "	*National Trades' Union*, Mar. 19, 1836.
	Orange, N. J.	Cordwainers [2]	" "	" " " Mar. 19, 1836.
	New Brunswick, N. J.	" "	" "	" " " Mar. 19, 1836.
	Troy, N. Y.	" "	" "	" " " Apr. 16, 1836.
	Lansingburg, N. Y.	Brushmakers	Red. in wages	*Public Ledger*, June 28, 1836.
	Lowell, Mass.	Cotton factory hands	" " "	*Boston Courier*, Oct. 7, 1836.
	Richmond	Printers		*Public Ledger*, Dec. 1, 1836.
	Harrisburg, Pa.	"	Higher wages	" " Dec. 1, 1836.
	Albany	Carpenters [2]	" "	*National Trades' Union*, Mar. 19, 1836.
		Painters [2]	" "	" " " Mar. 26, 1836.
	Lockport, N. Y.	Building trades	Ten-hour day	" " " Mar. 19, 1836.
	New York	Tailors	Red. in wages	*Evening Post* (N. Y.), Feb. , 1836.
		Shipwrights [2]	Higher wages	*National Trades' Union*, Mar. 4, 1836.
		Sheet iron workers	" "	" " " Mar. 4, 1836.
		Machinists	" "	*Evening Post* (N. Y.), Mar. 17, 1836.
		Handloom weavers [2]	" "	*National Trades' Union*, Mar. 19, 1836.
		Coachmakers	" "	*Courier & Enquirer* (N. Y.), Mar. 21, 1836.
		Varnishers & polishers	" "	" " " Mar. 24, 1836.
		Masons [2]	" "	*National Trades' Union*, Mar. 26, 1836.
		Cordwainers [1]	" "	" " " Apr. 9, 1836.
		Shoebinders (female)	" "	" " " Apr. 9, 1836.
		Leather dressers	" "	*Courier & Enquirer*, Apr. 25, 1836.
		Carpenters	" "	" " " June 16, 1836.

		Riggers [2]	Higher wages	*Courier & Enquirer*, Nov. 7, 1836.
		Umbrella makers (female)	Red. in wages	*Public Ledger*, Dec. 1, 1836.
1836	Buffalo	Carpenters	Higher wages	*National Trades' Union*, Feb. 27, 1836.
	Baltimore	Marble workers	Red. in wages	" " " Feb. 13, 1836.
		Carpet weavers	" " "	*Balt. Rep. & Com. Adv.*, Feb. 26, 1836.
		Ship labourers	" " "	" " " " " Feb. 29, 1836.
		Masons [2]	Maintain ten-hour day	" " " " " Mar. 4, 1836.
		Plasterers	Higher wages	" " " " " Apr. 2, 1836.
		Cabinetmakers	" "	*National Trades' Union*, Apr. 16, 1836.
		Cordwainers	" "	*Balt. Rep. & Com. Adv.*, Apr. 21, 1836.
		Handloom weavers	" "	" " " " " Apr. 26, 1836.
		Bricklayers	Closed shop	" " " " " Apr. 28, 1836.
		Blacksmiths	Higher wages	" " " " " May 2, 1836.
	Philadelphia	Handloom weavers	" "	*National Trades' Union*, Jan. 2, 1836.
		Bookbinders	Red. in wages	*Pennsylvanian*, Feb. 4, 1836.
		Hatters	Higher wages	" Feb. 4, 1836.
		Brass and iron finishers	" "	" Mar. 5, 1836.
		Carpenters [2]	" "	" Mar. 21, 1836.
		Leather dressers	" "	" Apr. 11, 1836.
		Oak coopers	" "	" Apr. 11, 1836.
		Brewery workers	" "	*National Laborer*, Apr. 23, 1836.
		Day labourers	" "	" " May 14, 1836.
		Chair makers	" "	" " May 21, 1836.
		Cordwainers [1]	" "	*Pennsylvanian*, June 9, 1836.
		Paper makers	" "	*National Laborer*, June 25, 1836.
		Black and white smiths	" "	" " July 2, 1836.
		Plasterers	Closed shop	" " July 16, 1836.
		Shipwrights	Against increase in hours	*Public Ledger*, Aug. 20, 1836.
		Weavers	Red. in wages	*National Laborer*, Sept. 12, 1836.

II. STRIKES, 1833–1837 — Continued.

YEAR	PLACE	TRADE	ISSUE	REFERENCE
1836	Philadelphia	Gilders	Higher wages	*National Laborer*, Sept. 17, 1836.
	Georgetown	Tailors	" "	*Public Ledger*, Oct. 21, 1836.
		Weavers	Red. in wages	*National Laborer*, Nov. 23, 1836.
		Carpet weavers	" " "	*Public Ledger*, Dec. 1, 1836.
		Saddlers		*Pennsylvanian*, Dec. 7, 1836.
1836	Washington	Cordwainers [1]	Higher wages	*Washingtonian*, Aug. 26, 1836.
		Cordwainers (men's branch)	" "	" Oct. 1, 1836.
		Carpenters [2]	Higher wages	" Oct. 12, 1836.
		Cabinetmakers	" "	" Oct. 19, 1836.
1837	New York	Cordwainers [2]	" "	" Oct. 13, 1836.
		Carpenters	Maintain wages	*Courier & Enquirer*, Mar. 14, 1837.
		Stevedores	Higher wages	*Public Ledger*, May 11, 1837.
		House painters	" "	*New Era* (N. Y.), July 4, 1837.
	New Orleans	Printers	" "	*Public Ledger*, Mar. 27, 1837.
	Detroit	Carpenters	" "	" " Apr. 20, 1837.
	Wheeling, W. Va.	Tailors	" "	" " May. 5, 1837.
	Philadelphia	Painters and glaziers	Red. in wages	*Pennsylvanian*, May 10, 1837.
	Bordentown, N. J.	Railway labourers	Against increase in hours	*Public Ledger*, May 16, 1837.
	Louisville	Printers	Higher wages	" " Nov. 9, 1837.

[1] Higher wages on ten-hour day principle.
[2] Declaration of strike, but no further evidence that strike actually took place.

PART FOUR

HUMANITARIANISM (1840–1860)

By Henry E. Hoagland

CHAPTER I

DEPRESSION AND IMMIGRATION

Business depression, 487. Intermittent unionism, 488. Immigration, 488. Changing character of immigration, 489. Housing conditions, 490. Competition of machinery, 491. Competition of prison labour, 492.

THE depression following the panic of 1837 continued practically until after the gold discoveries of 1849. There was a slight recovery in 1843 and 1844, but not enough to affect the general conclusion of fifteen years of "hard times." During these years of unemployment, aggressive trade unionism almost disappeared, and the field was occupied by philanthropy and schemes of speculative reform. Similar conditions existed in Europe, culminating in the revolutions of 1848. It was not until about 1852 that the effect of the gold discoveries was sufficiently felt to bring about a revival of trade unionism.

The business recovery of 1852 brought an end to the humanitarian speculations, but a decided and sudden increase in the cost of living took the place of the long period of unemployment. A newspaper writer, in 1853, estimated the standard workingman's budget for New York City as follows:[1]

Item	*Amount*
Rent	$100
Groceries	273
Clothing, bedding, etc.	132
Furnishing kitchen and parlour	20
Fuel	18
Lights	10
Taxes, croton, commutation, etc.	5
Physicians' and druggists' bills	10
Travelling	12
"Times," postage, and library fee	10
Total	$590
Church, etc.	10
	$600

1 The estimate is for the labourer, his wife, and two children living very moderately. New York *Times*, Nov. 8, 1853.

This, of course, left nothing for amusements, insurance, debts, etc., even assuming that the average income was $600, an assumption that was not borne out by the available wage statistics.

Again, in 1857 the speculative period broke, and another six or seven years of hard times and unemployment intervened until the war prosperity of 1863.

In 1840–1841 a few unions had been mentioned as existing in New York City. They were bookbinders, leather-dressers, shipwrights and caulkers, blacksmiths, gold and silversmiths, tailors, stonecutters, sail makers, and house carpenters.[2] These, however, were small and ineffective and the fall in prices in 1842 resulted in another period of inactivity.

Again, the rising prices of 1843 gave an impetus to trade unionism which continued intermittently for three years.[3] Strikes against the store-order system of payment and for increases in wages were frequent and enjoyed indifferent success. Short-lived unions sprang up, and in Pittsburgh and Cincinnati central trades' unions were established.[4]

These strikes show that a new element, immigration, was at this time assuming an important place in American industries. Among the immigrants was a slight but perceptible change in the proportions of farmers and wage-earners. From 1838 to 1842 the number of farmers increased from 6,667 to 12,966, while the number of mechanics and labourers increased from 8,327 to 29,072.[5]

For the first time the subject of immigration aroused protests among the representatives of American labour. The *Voice of Industry*[6] (Fitchburg, Massachusetts), called attention to the importation of strike-breakers and charged capitalists with securing themselves "against 'turn-outs' by creating a numerous poor and dependent populace," "whose abject condition in their own country made them tame, submissive and 'peacable, orderly citizens'" and who were willing to "work fourteen and sixteen hours per day for what capital sees fit to give them."

2 New York *Evening Post*, Apr. 10, 184 .

3 *Doc. Hist.*, VIII, 213 *et seq.*

4 New York *Tribune*, July 24, 1843; *Peoples' Paper*, Oct. 26, 1843.

5 Bromwell, *History of Immigration*, 99, 115.

6 Oct. 9, 1845. See *Doc. Hist.*, VII, 88.

The *Harbinger* [7] protested against the aristocratic and class feeling that had come into New England with the immigration of Irish and Canadian girls. Formerly "the sons and daughters of farmers deemed it no disgrace to labor for wages on a neighbor's farm or in his domestic employment." Now, they "compromise their social standing." "Would employers give $12 per month and $1 per week, for the help of their neighbor's sons and daughters, when they could get far more compliant and servile ones for half the money, and with a little instruction equally skilful." "Moderate farmers" now see their sons and daughters "quitting home, friends and paternal guardianship, to throng the factories of Manchester, Lowell and Andover."

On the other hand, the land reformers protested against the hostility to immigrants.[8] The rank and file of the newly formed Native American party were "the suffering working classes, smarting under the effects of competition," led by office seekers whose occupation had been "encroached upon by adopted citizens." The remedy would not lie in excluding the foreigners "from the polls and from office," but in freeing the country from the speculation in land and permitting the people to "go and cultivate the people's farm." This, too, was the remedy offered by the German communist refugee, Kriege, on behalf of the "distressed fugitives," who were "compelled by the oppression of despotism" to leave their native hearth. "If once the soil is free, then every honest workingman" will be welcomed as a "blessing to our republic." [9]

But if the immigration of the early forties excited protests and called for remedies from American labourers, that of the later forties and the fifties presented a serious situation in the seaboard cities. During the fifty-five years from 1790 to 1845 the total immigration was but a little more than 1,000,000. But as a result of the famines in Ireland and the revolutions of 1848 in continental Europe, the number of immigrants in the ten years from 1845 to 1855 was approximately 3,000,000.

The changing character of immigration also became more

[7] July 3, 1847. See *Doc. Hist.*, VII, 94.

[8] New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Mar. 23, 1844. See *Doc. Hist.*, VII, 90.

[9] *Volks-Tribun*, May 9, 1846. See *Doc. Hist.*, VII, 91.

marked. The great increase was now in the number of "labourers," distinguished from "farmers" and "mechanics." From 1847 to 1853 the number of immigrant labourers increased from 36,000 to 83,000, the number of farmers from 44,000 to 56,000, but the number of mechanics declined from 25,000 to 17,000.[10]

A large proportion of these immigrants remained in the cities of the seaboard. Philadelphia increased in population from 360,000 in 1840 to 670,000 in 1860. New York rose from 410,000 in 1840 to 910,000 in 1860. The problems which this sudden increase in population caused and the conditions under which these poverty stricken immigrants were forced to live during the years following 1848 are described in the reports of contemporary official investigations. The "Report of the Committee on Internal Health," made to the city government of Boston in 1849, in discussing the "wretched, dirty and unhealthy condition of a great number of the dwelling houses occupied by the Irish population," says: "These houses, for the most part, are not occupied by a single family, or even by two or three families, but each room, from garret to cellar, is filled with a family consisting of several persons, and sometimes with two or more families." The report states further that sanitary conditions in these houses were so bad as to be indescribable.[11]

In March, 1850, the chief of police of New York City took a census of the inhabited cellars. It was found that 18,456 persons occupied 8,141 cellars with no other rooms. This meant that about one-thirtieth of the population of New York City lived underground. The official report of this investigation says: "There are cellars devoted entirely to lodging, where straw at two cents, and bare floor at one cent a night can be had. . . . Black and white, men, women and children are mixed in one dirty mass. Scenes of depravity the most horrible are of constant occurrence." Bedrooms were found "without air, without light, filled with damp vapour from the mildewed walls, and with vermin; they are the most repulsive holes that ever a human being was forced to sleep in."[12]

10 Bromwell, *History of Immigration*, 135, 136.

11 "Report of the Committee on Internal Health," in Boston City, *Document*, No. 66, 1849, pp. 12–14; quoted in *North American Review*, LXXIV, 468.

12 New York *Tribune*, June 13, 1850; quoted in *North American Review*, LXXIV, 468.

Following the rise of prices, in 1853, a sanitary investigation was made by the New York Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor:[13]

"In Oliver Street, Fourth Ward, for example, is a miserable rear dwelling, 6 feet by 30, two stories and garret, three rooms on each of the first and second floors, and four in the attic — in all, ten small apartments, which contain *fourteen families*. The entrance is through a narrow, dirty alley, and the yard and appendages of the filthiest kind; yet the rent of the rooms averages $1.50 per week each, or $750 a year for the premises, which is at least thirty per cent of their value. In the same Ward there is a front and rear building, six stories above the basement, which contains 56 families numbering 250 persons. In Cherry Sreet, a 'tenement house,' on two lots, extending back from the street about 150 feet, five stories above the basement, so arranged as to contain 120 families, or more than 500 persons. A small room and bedroom are allowed each family in this building, which is of the better class; but the direful consequences of imperfect ventilation and overcrowding are severely felt. . . . Sub-letting is common in this Ward, which increases rents about 25 per cent. . . . In the fifth and most other Wards, in order to improve every foot of ground, tenements are crowded together in pentup courts, which extend the whole length of the lots."

The report goes on to describe conditions throughout the city, all parts of which yield a rent of from 15 to 50 per cent on the money invested.[14]

The introduction of machinery was also increasing the competition of labour. Devyr, the land reformer, said, in 1844: "Machinery has taken almost entire possession of the manufacture of cloth; it is making steady — we might say rapid — advance upon all branches of iron manufacture; the newly invented machine saws, working in curves as well as straight lines, the planing and grooving machines, and the tenon and mortise machine, clearly admonish us that its empire is destined to extend itself over all our manufactures of wood; while some of our handicrafts are already extinct, there is not one of them but has foretasted the overwhelming competition of this occult power."[15]

13 This association had in mind the erection of model dwelling houses as a means of counteracting the influence of land monopoly and high rents.

14 New York *Tribune*, Nov. 2, 1853.

15 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Mar. 30, 1844.

The competition of prison labour had reached the point, where, for the first time, an organised protest of considerable weight was made. In 1842, a secret organisation of mechanics, including masters, was started in Buffalo, under the name of the Mechanics' Mutual Protection. Its leader was Robert MacFarlane, a Scottish immigrant of 1836, who, afterwards, in 1848, became editor of the *Scientific American*. MacFarlane's union reached its high-water mark in 1847, with thirty-eight locals in New York, seven in Ohio, three in Michigan, and one each in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. This organisation was a late revival of the guild principle, for, while it gave attention to wages, hours and apprentices, it repudiated strikes. Its leading purpose was the abolition of competitive prison labour.[16]

[16] *Doc. Hist.*, VIII, 243 *et seq.*

CHAPTER II

ASSOCIATION AND CO-OPERATION

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The long depression which followed the panic of 1837 produced an unprecedented feeling of social unrest. The trade unionism of the thirties had failed to conquer the middleman. The newly acquired right to vote, instead of lifting the wage-earners, had strengthened middle-class politics. Unregulated competition had brought disaster to wage-earners and capitalists alike. The remedy was sought in a return to an idealised colonial system of economics dominated by agriculture and domestic industry.

In 1826, Robert Owen, the great forerunner of all modern schemes of labour welfare, labour legislation, and socialism, had moved from England and started his famous colony of New Harmony, in Indiana.[1] Here he brought together a galaxy of brilliant scientists as well as many classes of labourers. His scheme of socialism was strictly paternalistic and, while it attracted some attention at the time, was far in advance of the

1 See Podmore, *Robert Owen*, I, 285–346; also Lockwood, *The New Harmony Movement*.

industrial and commercial conditions that gave socialism an entrance. It had scarcely any effect on the labour movements of 1827 to 1837, except as it furnished to the early movement the personalities of Robert Dale Owen and Frances Wright.

However, from the failure of the experiment at New Harmony may be traced many movements and philosophies of later years, some of them directly in imitation of Owen's plan, others directly a reaction against his plan. Of the latter is the philosophy of Josiah Warren,[2] and the American school of intellectual anarchists. Of the former were several colonies that sprang up after 1840.[3]

The paternalism and concentration of authority in Owen's scheme were unsuited to American ideas, and hence, when the long depression from 1837 to 1849 forced attention upon the conditions of labour, this attention was directed under the guidance of a philosophy individualistic in the extreme. The idealised colonial system of small independent industry found its expression on the philosophic side in transcendentalism. Transcendentalism was a combination of the religious spirit of puritanism and an individualism that sought independence from social relations. On its negative side, it was a spirit of criticism and of revolt against tradition and conventionality; on its positive side, it deified humanity and demanded the untrammelled development of the individual.[4]

Transcendentalism assumed four forms: æsthetic individualism, the purest form of anarchism, illustrated in Thoreau, whose *Walden* has been called "the last word of democratic individualism"; the intellectual individualism of Emerson, expressed in his essays on "Man, the Reformer," "Intellect," "Self Reliance," "The Over-Soul," and the "New England Reformers"; the co-operative individualism of William H. Channing, which inspired the association movement; finally, the self-destructive individualism of Orestes A. Brownson.

The career of the last illustrates, in an extreme way, the effect which the condition of labour had upon the intellectual and religious unrest of the time, for Brownson was actively connected with the workingmen's movement from 1829 to 1840. Born in Vermont, in 1803,[5] his earliest education was that of religion

2 See below, I. 511.
3 See below, I. 505 *et seq.*
4 Cooke, *Poets of Transcendentalism*, 4.
5 See Brownson, *Brownson's Early Life.*

as the most important object in life. Afterwards, his omnivorous reading took him rapidly from Congregationalism, through Presbyterianism, Universalism, non-sectarianism to scepticism and atheism. Here he attacked alike the church and the state for their neglect of the masses. He published a radical paper in New York State in 1829.[6] His contempt for church and state culminated in 1840, in an article in the Boston *Quarterly Review* on "The Laboring Classes."[7]

There he described the effects of the factory system on the girls of New England. "The great mass wear out their health, spirits and morals without becoming one whit better off than when they commenced labor. The bills of mortality in these factory villages are not striking, we admit, for the poor girls when they can toil no longer go home to die. . . . We know no sadder sight on earth than one of our factory villages presents, when the bell at break of day, or at the hour of breakfast or dinner, calls out its hundreds or thousands of operatives." "For our part," he writes,[8] "we are disposed to seek the cause of the inequalities of which we speak, in religion and charge it to the priesthood. The priest is universally a tyrant," and there is "no difference between a catholic priest and a protestant clergyman. . . . Both are based on the principle of authority. . . . Both therefore ought to go by the board."

Following the overthrow of the priesthood, and the dethronement of all monopoly and all privilege, a rule of humanitarianism, the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, must follow. The importance of the end sought justified, in the mind of Brownson, any means, even violence. He continues:

"And is this a measure to be easily carried? Not at all. It will cost infinitely more than it cost to abolish either hereditary monarchy or hereditary nobility. It is a great measure and a startling. The rich, the business community, will never voluntarily consent to it, and we think we know too much of human nature to believe that it will ever be effected peaceably. It will be effected only by the strong arm of physical force. It will come, if it ever comes at all, only at the conclusion of war, the like of which the world as yet has never witnessed, and from which, however inevitable it may seem to the eye of philosophy, the heart of humanity recoils with horror.

[6] Brownson, *The Convert, or Leaves from My Experience*, 136.

[7] Boston *Quarterly Review*, 1840, III, 358–395, partly reprinted in *Brownson's Early Life*, 268–270.

[8] *Ibid.*, 243, 245.

We are not ready for this measure yet. There is much previous work to be done, and we should be the last to bring it before the legislature. The time, however, has come for its free and full discussion. It must be canvassed in the public mind, and society prepared for acting on it." [9]

The indignation which the publication of these extreme attacks aroused gave a new turn to Brownson's meditations. Hitherto he had observed the conditions of suffering humanity and had relied upon his reasoning powers to point out to him their causes. When he re-examined his premises, he gave up his hope of proof and relied on faith instead. The pendulum now swung in the opposite direction, until he finally embraced the Roman Catholic church and became the leading exponent of the doctrine of authority instead of reason in the solution of labour problems.[10]

FOURIERISM AND ASSOCIATION

This concurrence of social, intellectual, and religious unrest provided fertile soil for the propagation of schemes which promised the reorganisation of society. As soon as the religious revolt against orthodoxy became crystallised into new dogmas, a zeal for test experiments grew up. Into this soil the seed of association, a combination of a religion of love and an economy of domestic industry, was planted.

Charles Fourier,[11] from whose teachings sprang the American philosophy of association, traced his ideas on social reorganisation to a belief in the essential harmonies of the universe, and on this belief he framed a scheme for the regulation of all human activities. His object was to discover the laws which govern society. In this, he may be called the pathfinder for later sociologists and especially for modern psychological sociologists. However, the psychology upon which he based his system might more correctly be termed phrenology, and the social evolution in which he believed was a definite, mechanical, preordained arrangement of periods covering the social career of man in the past, the present, and the future. Up to Fourier's

9 *Ibid.*, 248.

10 Brownson's writings are published in twenty volumes, collected and arranged by Henry F. Brownson.

11 See Ely, *French and German Socialism*, 81–107.

time, society had traversed but eight of these periods. It was his privilege, so he thought, to discover the means by which man could advance through each of the remaining twenty-eight periods preordained for him and could thus fulfil his social destiny.

Fourier himself thought he had done for the science of society what Newton had done for astronomy, and was fond of comparing himself with Newton. Beginning where the latter left off, Fourier declared his belief in universal unity based upon the great natural law of attraction. This applied equally to the movements of the heavenly bodies; to the form, properties, colours and flavours of all created things; to the distribution of instincts and passions; and finally, to the mechanism of human society.[12] This is the basic theory which inspired the most influential American disciple of Fourier's system to exclaim: "Not through hatred, collision, and depressing competition; not through war, whether of nation against nation, class against class, or capital against labor; but through union, harmony, and the reconciling of all interests, the giving scope to all noble sentiments and aspirations, is the renovation of the world, the elevation of the degraded and suffering masses of mankind, to be sought and effected." [13]

It was Albert Brisbane who introduced Fourier to America.[14] Reared in ease and luxury, Brisbane never experienced the life of the masses.[15] Through close association with his father, a man much given to reflection on the problems of humanity, Brisbane's mind was receptive to social theories and he searched philosophic literature for a satisfactory remedy for the ills of society. This search took him to Europe at the age of nineteen where, for six years, he studied under such teachers as Guizot, Hegel, and Savigny. He at first accepted the principles of St. Simon, but later rejected them as "artificial and in some respects false." It was not until Fourier's *L'Association Domestique-Agricole* was accidentally placed in his hands that he gave himself up to a single theory of human association. The

12 Brisbane, *Concise Exposition of the Doctrine of Association.*

13 Greeley, on title-page of Brisbane's *Exposition.*

14 Fourier had an earlier disciple here in a man named Manesca. *Harbinger,* Apr. 18, 1846. We have no record of his influence.

15 For the facts of his life, see Brisbane, *Albert Brisbane: A Mental Biography, with a Character Study, by his wife, Redelia Brisbane.*

conversion was instantaneous and complete. He accepted the call to spread the new gospel and the course of his life was changed.

Unlike his American contemporaries, Brisbane accepted all of Fourier's theories on faith. To him, the "social destiny of man" was as fixed and "predestined" as the force of gravity or as molecular attraction. It remained only for man to discover the system of society to which he was "destined." This system once discovered, he expected the regeneration of the world to be as sudden and as complete as his own conversion to Fourierism.

Brisbane returned to America in 1834 and devoted his efforts to perfecting his own knowledge of "attractive industry," to lecturing, writing, and making converts. His first efforts as a propagandist were devoted to the organisation of groups of people to study Fourierism. These appeared as early as 1838, but were little known and had doubtful influence on the movement. The association movement really began with the publication of his first book, *The Social Destiny of Man, or Association and Reorganization of Industry,* in 1840. Following this he published his *Concise Exposition of the Doctrine of Association.* Both of these are adaptations of Fourier to American conditions. Brisbane's connection with various newspapers and reform publications during the next decade was merely for propagandist purposes. His visits to the numerous co-operative enterprises which were started during the forties were for the purpose of collecting illustrative material to be used in argument wherever he could catch the ear of a discontented workingman.

To the natural rights philosophers of the time, the wage-earners and all others were oppressed by monopolists and deprived of their just share in the fruits of production. They appealed for a more equitable system of distribution. To effect this, it was first necessary to wrest from the monopolists their control over natural rights. The means of accomplishing this reform was legislation.

But to Brisbane and his followers the wage-earners and all classes were suffering from the pernicious effects of free competition, instead of legislation restricting competition. The rem-

edy must be sought in more effective methods of production. In Brisbane's plan, the capitalist would continue to share in the returns because of his ownership of the capital; but the production would be so much increased that the three-twelfths [16] given to the capitalist would not be missed by the workers. Then, too, while present inequality must be recognised and tolerated, the benevolent operation of the principle of harmony instead of conflict would insure a rule of justice in the future and would even eventually eliminate the effects of past injustice.

It is one of the curious paradoxes of history that the "class-conscious" socialists of to-day exalt the name of Brisbane, who denied their theory of class struggle and political action. The means which he would employ to insure the increase of production was not legislation, for, had not "the free and untrammelled discussion of twenty-six State legislatures, of a national Congress, and of fifteen hundred newspapers" been ineffectual? [17] Instead, society must be reorganised into "groups," "series," and "sacred legions," having as a basis men's passions or desires. Production would then increase, because labour would become dignified and attractive as soon as men could do what they like and work with whom they like.

This efficiency test, based upon the psychology of the producer, is the essence of Brisbane's teaching. He was no exponent of a new system of ethics, of justice, of human rights. Even slavery was merely one form of overcoming "repugnant labour"; other forms were hired labour and the factory system. Each of these was objectionable, not because it was unjust, but because competition made it wasteful.[18]

Both Fourier and Brisbane, in their mania for increased production, forgetting that the producer is also a consumer, devised a scheme which must have destroyed the main object for which men labour. "The cabin, the cottage, or the dwelling house of civilisation," Brisbane said, "with its monotony, with the daily repetition of its petty and harassing cares, with its anti-social spirit, its absence of emulation, debilitates the energies of the soul and produces apathy and intellectual death, where all should be life and exhaltation. . . . We know how strongly

16 Labour was to receive seven-twelfths and skill, two-twelfths. Brisbane, *Concise Exposition*, 61.

17 Brisbane, *Social Destiny of Man*, IX.

18 *Ibid.*, 97, 103, 110.

civilised man clings to his isolated household or family life, and what prejudices there are to overcome on this point . . . there at least he finds unity of interests; and from the repulsiveness and antagonism of the civilised *outward* life has arisen that family selfishness, which, concentrating all affections and hopes within its own little circle, leaves the heart indifferent to the woes and sufferings of mankind. It is in this selfishness that association will find an instinctive, inveterate opponent; and for that reason both it and the system which produces it must be attacked, as the two primary obstacles, the one moral and the other physical, to a social reform." [19]

Brisbane's first influential convert was Horace Greeley. In fact, the pupil became so great a leader in the cause of association that he over-shadowed the teacher. This was due to Greeley's knowledge of the working classes, of their weaknesses and limitations, and to his refusal to accept that portion of Fourierism which his experience taught him was impracticable.[20]

Greeley's early life was spent in poverty.[21] Living in a New Hampshire village until he had reached the age of twenty, he had scarcely learned the concepts "mass" and "class" before he reached maturity. The early training upon which his moral and business codes were constructed was puritanic, but the one idea foremost in all his philosophy was that of "universal justice." This he received from the teachings of the transcendentalists. Justice depended, not upon organisation, but upon character. His first réforms were personal; he was preacher rather than reformer.[22] By industry and frugality he had risen from wage-earner to employer. His own experiences in warding off bankruptcy in the late thirties, his knowledge of increasing business concentration, and the growing mass of dependent wage-earners, caused Greeley to seek a plan by which others could accomplish by working together what he had done by himself. With Brisbane, association was the end; with Greeley, it was the means of insuring to each individual

19 *Ibid.*, 132.

20 Greeley refused to accept many of Fourier's ideas as "erratic," "mistaken," "visionary," and "contrary to sound Christian morality." New York *Tribune*, Apr. 20, 1853; also *Recollections of a Busy Life*, 147.

21 See *Ibid.*; also Parton, *Life of Horace Greeley*.

22 See Commons, Introduction to Vol. VII of *Doc. Hist.*

"the full product of his toil." In the same manner he accepted those parts of land reform, trade unionism, labour legislation, currency reform, and abolition of slavery, which he believed would aid in bringing about "universal justice." Greeley was, throughout his entire life, the subject of criticism from both radicals and conservatives: his knowledge of the working classes guarded him against accepting the impossible ideas of the former; his sincere desire to aid the oppressed prevented his acquiescence in the let-alone policy of the latter.[23]

In 1840 and the early part of 1841 Greeley gave considerable space in his paper, *The New Yorker,* to a discussion of the condition of the working classes.[24] In seeking a remedy, he expressed a belief that palliatives had been proved ineffectual and that the root of the evil must be reached. About this time Brisbane's first book appeared and was soon followed by the publication of his periodical, *The Future.* Greeley at once accepted the "practical suggestions" which he found therein. He did this in defiance of many of his friends who opposed Brisbane on religious grounds. When the New York *Tribune* was started on March 1, 1842, one column was given over to the discussion of the new faith and was conducted by Brisbane.

The influence which Greeley and the *Tribune* wielded in the cause of association throughout the decade of the forties perhaps outweighed that of all others.

Among the other publications that advocated association was *The Future,* which was discontinued as soon as Greeley opened the columns of the New York *Tribune* to Brisbane. In 1843 Parke Godwin published *The Pathfinder.* This also was short-lived. In October, 1843, Brisbane and Macdaniel established *The Phalanx, or Journal of Social Science,*[25] as the official organ of the American associationists. The last number appeared May 28, 1845. It was then moved to Brook Farm and the name was changed to *The Harbinger,* under which title it continued until 1849, as the official organ of the associationists. Other associationist papers were *The Present,* published by Channing (Boston); *The Pioneer Phalanx* or *Independent*

23 *Ibid.*

24 *New Yorker,* Dec. 26, 1840, Jan. 2 and 16, 1841.

25 To correspond to the *Paris Phalanx* and the *London Phalanx,* the organs respectively of the French and the English Fourierites.

Magazine (Watertown, New York); *The Social Reformer,* first issued in Maine and later moved to Boston and merged with *The Harbinger* in 1845; the *Spirit of the Age* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania); *New Industrial World* (Cincinnati, Ohio); *The Future* (Ann Arbor, Michigan); *The Ontario Union; The Primitive Expounder* (Ann Arbor, Michigan); and *The Alphadelphia Tocsin* (Alphadelphia Phalanx, Michigan). In addition, numerous tracts appeared from time to time explaining the doctrines of association or describing the activities of phalanxes.

The general press was divided on the question of association, a part favourable, a part hostile, and the remainder indifferent. It is difficult to estimate the number in each class, but the associationist press from time to time quotes almost a hundred newspapers which gave favourable attention to the doctrines. Those quoted covered all sections of the country. Of the papers which opposed association most vigorously, the New York *Globe,* the New York *Herald,* the Cincinnati *Chronicle,* the New York *Courier and Enquirer,* the Pittsburgh *Chronicle* and the New York *Observer* were most often quoted.

To enumerate the men and women who, as writers, speakers, and organisers, spread the gospel of association during the forties, is to name many of the leading historians, essayists, orators, journalists, poets, and artists of America at that time. These included the three Channings — William E., William F., and William H.— Joseph J. Cooke, George W. Curtis, Charles A. Dana, John S. Dwight, A. J. H. Duganne, Parke Godwin, T. W. Higginson, Henry James, Marx E. Lazarus, Sarah G. Bagley, Osborne Macdaniel, John Orvis, George Ripley, E. W. Parkman, L. W. Ryckman, Mary Spencer Pease, Francis G. Shaw, Miss E. A. Starr, John G. Whittier, and W. W. Story. Others, serving as speakers or writers, but less prominent in other connections, would increase this list many times. But few of these leaders ever toiled with the masses. They were distinctly members of the middle class and brought to the movement a middle-class philosophy of aiding the depressed masses.

Yet the promises of "attractive industry" fell upon fertile ground. Discontented workers listened to the new gospel. The Fourier clubs of 1838–1840 had been composed only of re-

formers and students. In 1843 began the period of propaganda. The first plan tried was the county or district convention, at which Brisbane or some other leader would expound the doctrine of association. This would be followed by the organisation of the friends of the movement in the locality and, if possible, by the establishment of a phalanx. These county and district conventions were held in various parts of the country, some as far west as Kentucky.

In order to reach a clearer understanding of the purposes and methods of propaganda, a general convention of the friends of association was called to meet in Boston, December 26 and 27, 1843.[26] This was followed in April, 1844, by a second general "Convention of the Friends of Association" in New York City, which was attended by delegates from New England, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. These two organisations continued in existence until the American Union of Associationists was formed in 1846. This national organisation adopted a uniform constitution and plan of organisation for the use of all affiliated societies. The purpose of the national organisation was to serve as a clearing-house for local and district associations and to carry on the work of propaganda. It existed until 1850.[27] By that time the influence of the associationists had practically died out and interest in the various forms of co-operation had succeeded it.

Early in the propaganda of association, attacks were made upon the new doctrine on account of its non-religious character.[28] Denials were published from time to time, but the sectarian opposition to association continued strong enough to militate against the spread of the doctrine. In order to overcome this opposition, William H. Channing established in Boston in 1846 a "Religious Union of Associationists," which he later called the "Church of Humanity." He conducted regular services and attempted in his non-sectarian sermons to prove the true religious character of association and the essential unity of all sects, from Unitarians to Catholics.[29] Similar churches of

26 *Phalanx*, Dec. 5, 1843.
27 *Harbinger*, Oct. 3, 1846, Apr. 10, June 5, and Oct. 23, 1847, Apr. 29 and May 13, 1848; New York *Weekly Tribune*, May 15, 1847, May 19, 1849.
28 New York *Tribune*, Feb. 10, 1843.
29 *Harbinger*, Nov. 14, 1846, Feb. 6, Nov. 27, and Dec. 4, 1847, Dec. 23, 1848.

humanity were organised in other cities, some of which existed long after association had ceased to be a popular doctrine.

While Fourierism did not have a logical parent in America, its Americanised form — association — could hardly have received the support accorded it except for the preparation made by previous attempts to reorganise society. These may be considered briefly in three groups: First, while the Owenism of 1826 had failed, not all of Owen's followers admitted defeat. As soon as the country began to recover from the panic of 1837, Owen societies sprang up in numerous places and several Owen communities were projected.[30] In January, 1841, the *Herald of the New Moral World and Millenial Harbinger* appeared in New York as the organ of revived Owenism, and was issued until August, 1842. At this time there was in New York an "Owen Society of Rational Religionists" and also a society of "One-Mentians." The latter differed slightly from the former in its religious views. The One-Mentian organisation had a branch in Newark, New Jersey.[31] Perhaps the most prominent Owenite at this time was John A. Collins, who later founded the Skaneateles (New York) Community, an anti-slavery experiment, based on Owen's principles, with *The Communist* as its organ.[32] This attempted revival of Owen communities failed; but the Owen ideal of a reorganised society retained its strength and needed but the substitution of a new plan to give it expression.

In the second place, the experience and influence of the older religious communities undoubtedly aided the movement for Association. These communities,[33] including the Ephratists, the Dunkers, the Moravians, the Shakers, the Rappites, the Zoarites, and the Snowbergers, were based upon the religious philosophy of withdrawing from the defilements of this world in order that their members might be permitted to make better preparation for their entrance into the next. Some of them continued for generations and numbered a thousand or more in their membership.

30 A list of projected communities was given in the New York *Tribune*, Feb. 1, 1844.

31 *Herald of the New Moral World*, July 1, 1842.

32 Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, 161.

33 See *Ibid.*, for the history and purpose of each.

Finally, there were the more recent attempts of the transcendentalists to aid in establishing on earth and in this life the heaven of which they believed Christ preached. The Unitarians' desire for a community of kindred spirits resulted in Brook Farm; the Universalists founded Hopedale.[34] The former soon accepted the doctrine of association, and became the centre of the association movement.

Soon after the columns of the New York *Tribune* were utilised by Brisbane, inquiries came in asking where and how soon a practical experiment in association would be made.[35] Brisbane was unprepared to meet this demand.[36] But, aided by Greeley, he set about making plans for an association of 2,000 people, having a capital of at least $400,000. In the fall of 1842 books were opened for the subscription of capital stock to the North American Phalanx, to be located near New York City.[37] Subscriptions were slow in coming, and early the following year a group of impatient mechanics, aided by a few friends, founded in western Pennsylvania an association which they called Sylvania. Brisbane at first refused to recognise this attempt, because he wished "either to establish an association upon a sufficiently extended scale to demonstrate the immense advantages and the harmonies — social as well as material — of the system, or else continue the propagation of the doctrine theoretically."

Sylvania was the first of the phalanxes. Following this at least forty others were established and as many more were proposed in localities as widely separated as Illinois and Massachusetts. The members belonging to a single phalanx numbered from 15 to 900; the acreage from 200 to 30,000.

In accordance with the wishes of Brisbane, the North American Phalanx was the test experiment on which American Fourierites staked their growth in this country. It began operations in September, 1843, and fourteen months later the total value of its property, including land and improvements, was $28,000. Its membership at this time was 77, 26 of the members being children under 16. During the next eight years the property increased in value to $80,000, and the membership to

34 *Ibid.*
35 New York *Tribune*, May 12, 1842.
36 Brisbane, *Albert Brisbane: A Mental Biography*, 212.
37 New York *Tribune*, Oct. 28, 1842.

112, 27 of whom were children under 16. This was perhaps the high point of prosperity within the phalanx. In the spring of 1853 — the tenth year of the phalanx — dissension developed and a part of the membership seceded, forming a new association called the Raritan Bay Union, at Perth Amboy, New Jersey.[38] The old North American virtually disappeared in September of the following year,[39] although the officers held the property until early in 1856, when the association dissolved and the remaining property was sold.

In point of duration and financial success the North American Phalanx easily outstripped all its contemporaries. Yet its maximum membership was only 112, less than one-sixteenth of what it was intended to have; and its capital never amounted to more than 20 per cent of the proposed amount, while, at its close, the association was in debt.

However, long before this time was reached, the workingmen had ceased to expect aid from the phalanxes, while Greeley and other more practical believers in association had turned their attention to applying the principle to the remedy of specific evils.[40]

ASSOCIATION BECOMES CO-OPERATION

The chief reason why Brisbane and his followers failed to interest more mechanics and labourers in the scheme to reorganise society on the basis of attractive industry was the inability of the working classes to see the relationship between a phalanx in the wilderness in Pennsylvania and the wrongs which they suffered in Philadelphia. They had no quarrel with the existing form of family relationship nor with the privacy of the home. Neither did they believe with Brisbane that existing civilisation was wholly bad and that only a complete regeneration, involving the overthrow of all existing institutions, could save it. Instead, they recognised specific oppressors in employers who controlled wages, merchant-capitalists and bankers who controlled prices and credits, and landlords who determined rents.

38 This was a feeble attempt and probably did not last long.

39 The association suffered heavy losses from fire at this time. Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, 495–499.

40 For further history of the phalanxes, see *Doc. Hist.*, VII, 240 *et seq.*; Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, 233 *et seq.*

To meet the demand for protection against these three classes, Greeley and other more practical believers in association permitted their devotion to the "dignity and attractiveness" of labour to wane. Together with other reformers who were not adherents of Brisbane but who planned to satisfy this same demand, they devised modifications of the economic ideas of association. These may be classified, according to the specific oppression which they professed to remedy, into schemes for productive co-operation to eliminate the wrongs imposed by employers; distributive co-operation and reforms in the system of banking and exchange to prevent extortion by merchant-capitalists and bankers; and building associations to relieve the pressure of high rents. These reforms were interrelated in their operation, and, although their complete success would have eliminated the necessity for state activity, they nevertheless sooner or later became involved in demands for remedial legislation.

Greeley at first offered as a substitute for the existing system of wages and profits a combination of labourers and capitalists such as had been tried with considerable success in France even before the Revolution of 1848. This scheme allowed the labourer a fair wage, the capitalist a fair rate of profit, and provided for a division of the surplus among labourers and capitalists. When the cotton goods manufacturers of Pittsburgh and Alleghany City announced in 1848 that they must cut down the wages of their employés because a state law had reduced the working day to ten hours, Greeley proposed to them that they adopt the profit-sharing plan. In speaking of this proposal he said: "If now the cotton spinners were paid the lowest market value of their work; then the proprietor a fair interest on his capital, the market value of his skill, superintendence, etc.; and thirdly, the balance were divided as profits among owner, directors and all hands, we should hear no more of such collisions." [41] He gave as the advantages of this plan, more permanence and steadiness of employment, a sense of mutual interest and dependence, an earnest endeavour by all to avoid waste and to increase production, a more republican relationship between capital and labour, employer and employé, and the

41 New York *Tribune*, Aug. 7, 1848.

devotion of all the talents of each to the mutual good of all.[42]

When profit-sharing failed to meet with success, Greeley excluded the capitalist as such and appealed for a union which would combine the functions of capitalist and wage-earner. Here, as elsewhere, he disagreed with those who believed the employer, the middleman, and the landlord the only enemies of the wage-earners. "It is the aristocracy of their own vices that primarily oppresses the workers of our day — their prodigality, selfishness, sensuality, and (perhaps too well-founded) want of faith in each other."[43] "The workingmen of this city, poor as they are, could put together half a million dollars to-morrow, for any purpose of common benefit, if they were not afraid of being cheated out of it. They lack faith in each other, and, to a great extent, the qualities which should inspire it."[44]

Yet in spite of this distrust, he had faith in the possibilities of productive co-operation, although he looked mainly to the young men to accept his plan, conceding that perhaps the men with families would have little to invest. His idea of productive co-operation was expressed in the term "self-employment." Although advocating other reforms, the abolition of the wage system was his leading hope, and for this reason he may be considered the exponent of productive co-operation.[45] In so far as the employer was at the same time the purveyor of his wares, his elimination through productive co-operation would have meant the disappearance of his function as middleman. In such cases, the co-operative "store" or warehouse would combine the functions of manufacturing and of selling the products.

Besides this incidental effect of productive co-operation, there were at least four distinct classes of reformers who believed in the principle of distributive co-operation.

The first accepted distributive co-operation as a stepping stone to productive co-operation. Recognising the limitations of the

42 *Ibid.*, Aug. 19, 1848.
43 *Ibid.*, Dec. 6, 1849.
44 *Ibid.*, Oct. 20, 1849.
45 Recognising that the wages of his own employés were fixed by the competitive wage system which he sought to abolish, Greeley made a rather feeble attempt to offset possible injustice to them by dividing the capital of the New York *Tribune* into shares of $1,000 each and selling a part of the stock to men in the establishment, reserving a controlling interest in the names of the original partners. Cf. Bartlett, *Modern Agitators*, 377.

savings from wages, they believed the collection of the relatively small capital necessary to start a co-operative store to be possible for the wage-earners. They doubted, however, the practicability of collecting from the savings from wages enough to establish productive co-operation. The profits from their store, instead of being divided among the shareholders, would be allowed to accumulate until sufficient capital was available for making, as well as selling, the products.

The second group, like the first, believed the wage-earners were being cheated by both employers and traders; but, lacking faith in the business and managerial ability of the working classes, they believed productive co-operation impracticable and looked to co-operative stores to regulate prices.

From the protests of these two groups developed the Protective Union idea [46] which became prominent in New England. The original plan of organisation had two purposes: first, to buy goods for domestic consumption at wholesale and then to retail them at cost; and second, to conduct a sort of mutual insurance.[47] Later a federation of unions was brought about and a common purchasing agent was added.

A third group saw the evils of the existing system of price fixing, not in the principle itself, but in "superfluous trading." [48] The remedy was simply to "concentrate our retail business." The plan proposed was the organisation of a Co-operative Labor League to be composed of all wage-earners, whether members of trade unions or unorganised.[49] The organisation and management of the League was to be vested in a Board of Control, composed of labour leaders and friends of reform. It should be the duty of this board to take a census of the city in order to determine the minimum number of stores necessary to supply the demands of the members of the League. Contracts were then to be made with this number of dealers, so

[46] This term "Protective Union" was widely used in a double sense throughout the years from 1847 to 1854. It signified both the institution described here and the combinations of labourers banded together for the trade union purposes as described in chapter v. To avoid confusion, this term will not be used in the latter case except where it occurs as a proper name.

[47] For the history of the Protective Unions, see Massachusetts Bureau of Labor, *Report*, 1877; New York *Tribune*, May 25, 1853; and Bemis, *Co-operation in New England*, in American Economic Association, *Publications*, I, 338.

[48] Pond, in New York *Tribune*, Aug. 21, 1850. Pond was a delegate to the New York City Industrial Congress from the Manufacturing Jewellers.

[49] New York *Tribune*, Aug. 21 and Dec. 12, 1850.

situated as to meet the trade most readily. The chosen dealers were to grant a considerable reduction to members of the League in return for exclusive patronage. Like other plans, this was put forward as a panacea. It would reduce prices, produce more efficient service, remove the evils of the credit system, make available more capital for productive purposes, stimulate wages, and, by driving out superfluous traders, make the land which they occupied available for homes for the workingmen and thus reduce rents, relieve congestion, make homes more attractive, and finally, by freeing the wage-earner from the clutches of the capitalist and the landlord, eliminate "baneful distinctions in society."

The fourth group sought the evils oppressing the masses entirely in the systems of exchange and banking. They believed the merchant-capitalists and bankers to be the common enemies of both employers and wage-earners. The remedies proposed were of two kinds: the co-operative purchasing agencies or stores according to types just mentioned; and second, reforms in the system of exchange and banking, to insure the producer the full value of his labour. The second remedy assumed several forms.

SYSTEMS OF EXCHANGE AND BANKING

The basis for the schemes of exchange proposed in the forties was a labour-cost theory, including in the term "labour" the three elements, manual, mental, and managerial. In that decade, with wage labour not yet clearly separated out, there was no misconception of manual labour as the sole kind of labour. The "producer" furnished brains and management as well as labour. Also, accumulation did not need abstinence but only the addition of mental and managerial functions to the manual function of the labourer. Consequently, with free competition, the supply of commodities continually approaches the point where commodities exchange according to labour-cost. This is true also of fixed capital, since it is only a product of labour. But the merchant-capitalist, by virtue of his monopoly of the media of exchange, prevented the interchange of commodities according to labour-cost. To restore this true basis of exchange, the monopoly power of the merchant-capitalist must be broken.

Out of this reasoning grew several plans for revolutionising the media and modes of exchange.

Josiah Warren [50] has been called the first American anarchist. He was born in 1798 in Boston, but moved to Cincinnati at the age of twenty. He was originally a disciple of Robert Owen and lived in the Owenite colony of New Harmony for two years, but soon rejected socialism for extreme anarchism. In 1827 he opened the first of his "time stores," in which was put into practice his theory of "labour for labour." The goods in this store were sold at a price which admitted of no profit; then, in payment for the time spent by the storekeeper in waiting on the customer, the latter gave the former a labour note, promising to pay, on demand, an equal amount of time at his own kind of work.[51] Warren helped to found colonies in 1847 in Ohio, and some years later on Long Island, where this principle was to be applied. He published a book entitled *Equitable Commerce* in 1846, but his chief method of spreading his doctrines was by means of what were called "Parlor Conversations," a kind of *causeries,* held mostly in New York and Boston. Warren's political theories were intensely individualistic, and he desired to see all the activities now belonging to the government transferred to private persons. His chief economic doctrine was that price should be determined by labour-cost. Warren was a practical man, a successful professional musician, and an inventor, obtaining his best results with typographical machinery.

As early as 1839, William Beck proposed a ticket system of exchange.[52] Recognising that money is simply "an intermediate article moving between claim and claim, floating between commodity and commodity, taken as the receipt for one, and forming the title to another," [53] he proposed as a substitute for money in this circle of creditors and debtors a system of account-keeping. In this accounting system each piece of property,

50 This account of Warren's life and teaching is summarised from Bailie, *Josiah Warren.*

51 See above, I, 95, 96, for the attempts to reduce Warren's theories of exchange to practice.

52 In a book which he published in Cincinnati under the title, *Money and Banking, or their Nature and Effects Considered, together with a Plan for the Universal Diffusion of the Legitimate Benefits without their Evils.* The author is a "Citizen of Ohio," and had doubtless been influenced by Josiah Warren. The book may be found in the Library of Congress.

53 *Ibid.*, 75.

whether current product or fixed capital, was represented by a ticket of equivalent value. The aggregate value of all tickets equalled the aggregate value of all property. Tickets would be handled by agents of the government, properly organised to record local, district, national, and international exchanges. These agents would enter the value of each purchase against the buyer and in favour of the seller, or in other words, would transfer the amount of purchasing power from buyer to seller in exchange for the purchase. Personal credit and mortgages would be recorded in a similar way, being, of course, a matter of agreement between borrower and lender.

Beck's scheme is chiefly an attempt to restore to the master workman the merchant-function which had been taken from him by those who monopolised the circulating media. He was not deeply concerned in elevating the condition of the journeyman.

The German immigrant, William Weitling, was, from the standpoint of philosophy, the leading exponent at this time of the bank of exchange. Weitling spent his early life in Magdeburg, Germany, the "hotbed of liberalism." "He knew poverty by experience and acquired by inheritance a hostile spirit toward all masters." [54] In 1837 he went to Paris, where he became an active member of the *Bund der Gerechten.* His deep religious convictions [55] led him, like Greeley, to base his reforms on moral grounds. His uncompromising spirit made him at first revolutionary; [56] in America he became more conciliatory.

Weitling early engaged in newspaper work, but his first work of any note was his *Die Menschheit, wie sie ist und wie sie sein sollte,* published in 1838. Numerous other revolutionary writings soon followed. His early system of thought is clearly enunciated in his *Garantieen der Harmonie und Freiheit,* first published in 1842. This theory of society is based on the three fundamental desires, to acquire, to enjoy, to know. Man's desires are satisfied by his capabilities. Desires stir up capa-

54 Clark, "A Neglected Socialist," in *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science,* V, 720. For facts of Weitling's life, see this source and Mehring's *Weitling.*

55 Weitling, *Das Evangelium eines armen Sünders.*

56 When Marx and Engels proposed compromise in 1846, Weitling remained thoroughly communistic. In a letter dated Mar. 21, 1846, he says of Marx: "I see in Marx nothing else than a good encyclopædia, but no genius. Rich people made him an editor — *voilà tout.*" Clark, "A Neglected Socialist," 729.

bilities, and these bring about activity; the fruits of activity become enjoyments, which in turn awaken desires. Here is the natural law of human progress. Hence the task of all social organisation is to guarantee to the individual the freedom and harmony of all desires and capabilities.[57]

In December, 1847, Weitling came to America, but the upheavals of the next year took him again to Europe. In August, 1849, he returned to America, and in January, 1850, he began the publication of his *Republik der Arbeiter* (New York),[58] a monthly paper designed to spread his theories among the German labourers in this country. Through the columns of this paper Weitling became to the German workers what Greeley was to the English and Irish.

To Weitling the existing monetary systems had, on the one hand, increased the possibilities of riches and power, and on the other, had accentuated poverty and misery. To him, the *merchant-capitalist,* not the employer, was the one great enemy of the labourer, and all combinations and efforts should be directed against this class. For this reason he did not favour productive co-operation. "As soon as the tailors, the bakers, the shoemakers, etc., open up their co-operative stores, a number of people will flock to them who have been working, not for the big employers, but for the small ones. . . . Therefore, I would not recommend productive association, but the alliance of all workmen and small employers against Capital, which is our common enemy." [59]

His opposition to Greeley's notion of self-employment and to associations is set forth in the first issue of his paper: "It is not advisable to begin with founding colonies, nor with adding to the number of existing co-operative shops. . . . First, because we thereby divide our forces; second, because we could create the means easier with a different beginning, and could utilise them subsequently to the greater advantages of the par-

[57] *Garantieen der Harmonie und Freiheit,* 117 *et seq.*

[58] The *Republik der Arbeiter* appeared as a monthly magazine from January, 1850, to April, 1851, when it was changed into a weekly. Weitling published it again at monthly intervals for a short time before it went out of existence in July, 1855. Schlüter, *Deutsche Arbeiterbewegung in Amerika,* 119.

[59] *Republik der Arbeiter,* September, 1850. It is true that about the time this was written Weitling made an appeal to the New York City Industrial Congress for aid for just such an association as he was opposing here. He did this, however, as a representative of the German Tailors of New York, and not as expressing his own views.

ticipants; third, because all those experiments suffer from lack of money, which we can remedy through a bank of exchange; fourth, because such miniature shops and associations do not offer sufficient room to the passions of men." [60]

Weitling's constructive theories were embodied in his "bank of exchange" and he looked to this alone to deliver the worker from his miseries. "The bank of exchange is the soul of all reforms, the foundation for all co-operative attempts. Just as the present money system, in its various ramifications, creates, organises, and fortifies all social evils from which we are suffering, so the bank of exchange will represent the new money system, which will be a strong weapon against the old money system of swindle." [61] He proposed that stores for raw materials and finished products should be established and that paper money should be issued as the medium of exchange. To these stores the workmen should bring their products and receive for them what they needed in exchange, according to the labour value of their products. The advantages which he claimed for this plan he enumerated as follows: First, the members will get a steady market for their products which will abolish unemployment and its attendant evils; second, the profits formerly realised by the middleman will now remain with the producer; third, when all producers become members of the bank, they will possess the sole control of the market, and will be in a position to fix the prices of all the products of their labour; fourth, the bank will cover the entire market, and therefore it will be able to balance the supply and the demand; fifth, the centralisation of exchange will greatly diminish its expense, because the numerous agents needed under the present system of commerce will be dispensed with.[62]

In his plan, Weitling permitted the formation of trade associations of journeymen, after the bank should have been established, for the purpose of producing their own products. Each such association would fix the prices of its products according to the labour-time principle of value. It would also fix the wages of its members, measured in bank scrip, and would create an inspection bureau to guarantee the quality of its products. Besides serving as an agency for the exchange of prod-

60 *Ibid.*, January, 1850. 61 *Ibid.*, March, 1850. 62 *Ibid.*, October, 1850.

ucts, the bank would provide education, old age pensions, disability pensions, hospitals, etc., for its members. The profits made from the sale of products would provide a revenue for these purposes.

Thus Weitling gave up his early communistic faith in the common ownership of all property and the centralised management of both production and exchange, and substituted the anarchistic plan of Proudhon, in which exchange alone was centralised.[63] The reason for this change must be sought rather in the different political and social conditions which Weitling encountered in America than in the economic conditions, for these were very similar to those in Europe, the merchant-capitalist being the dominant figure in both cases. But in Europe only a political and social revolution could effect a change; in America he encountered a demand for economic reforms which would not destroy existing political institutions. As a result, his bank of exchange was a compromise between revolution and the existing order. He would continue existing systems of production, or would permit productive co-operation, but he would abolish entirely the monopoly power of the merchant-capitalist.

Weitling was, during the years 1850 and 1851, a leading figure in the German labour movement in America.[64] A few organisations considered his scheme favourably, and others accepted it in part.[65]

In New York Weitling's dictatorial policy and his refusal to submit to majority rule soon produced personal enemies. These found a means of expression in the *Abendzeitung,* a co-operative paper established in October, 1850, and at first favourable to Weitling. Other elements developed in the German labour movement which, while not openly hostile to Weitling, yet served to overshadow his agitation for a " bank of exchange." Weitling continued to publish the *Republik der Arbeiter* until

63 Weitling himself attempted to reconcile his two points of view by substituting " possession " for " ownership," saying that society should own all property but permit individuals to possess it. *Ibid.*, September, 1850.

64 He succeeded in enlisting several devoted disciples who served as his agents in spreading " bank of exchange " propaganda. The most active of these was Franz Arnold, also a native of Germany. Throughout the year 1850, Arnold conducted a campaign for the establishment of " banks " in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and other western cities. However, in July, 1851, he abandoned Weitling and became an agitator for co-operation according to Greeley's plan.

65 See below, I, 566 *et seq.*

1854, although he ceased to be a leader of German movements after 1851. In 1854 he obtained, through political influence, the position of registrar of German immigration at Castle Garden.

In Philadelphia John Campbell exercised the leadership which Greeley enjoyed in New York. Campbell was a bookseller,[66] publisher, author, and a frequent contributor to such papers as *Young America* and the New York *Tribune*. He was for several years the regular New York *Tribune* reporter of the Philadelphia labour movement. He was also prominent as a speaker and organiser, being the first secretary of the Philadelphia Social Reform Society in 1844, and one of the organisers of the Social Improvement Society and other similar organisations.[67] Campbell's views were a kind of compendium of all the schemes of his period. Natural rights, social harmony, labour-cost, labour notes, and land limitation were joined with government ownership of workshops, of banks, and of transportation. During the years from 1845 to 1852, he was perhaps the most active advocate of the rights of labour in Philadelphia. It was through his efforts mainly that the workers in that city were awakened to demand the various reforms proposed there in 1850 and the following year. Scarcely an important mass meeting was held that did not have him as one of the speakers. Yet the labourers were not ready to accept his radical views, and, like Weitling, he began to lose prestige among them in the latter part of 1851. In one of his letters to the *Tribune* at this time he wrote that the chief error which the labourers in Philadelphia had fallen into was "*too much caution;* they dread that men who do not belong to a trade may use them, were they permitted to become active among them." [68]

The philosophical anarchism which was mixed with other notions in the theories and experiments of Warren, Beck, Weitling, Campbell, and the phalanxes became consistent and free

66 He was in partnership with E. W. Powers, also a prominent reformer.

67 Campbell's writings cover various subjects, including: *Negro-mania: being an Examination of the Falsely Assumed Equality of the various Races of Men; Examination of English Corn and Provision Laws;* and *Lectures upon the Great French Revolution.* The book in which he expounds his own theories most clearly is *A Theory of Equality; or, the Way to Make Every Man Act Honestly,* published at the time of the revolution of 1848. He dedicates the book to Lamartine, Louis Blanc, and other members of the Provisional Government of the French Republic.

68 New York *Tribune,* Nov. 29, 1850.

from any notion of the state and government in the theories of Stephen Pearl Andrews. In his address before the New York Mechanics' Institute in the latter part of 1850, he declared "The celebrated formula of Fourier, that 'destinies are proportioned to attractions,' means, when translated into less technical phraseology, that society must be so reorganised, that every individual shall be empowered to choose and vary his own destiny or condition and pursuits in life, untrammelled by social restrictions; in other words, so that every man may be a law unto himself, paramount to all other human laws, and the sole judge for himself of the divine law and of the requisitions of his own individual nature and organization." [69]

Accepting the ideas of Josiah Warren concerning "equitable commerce," Andrews restated the basic principles in the following terms: "Simple Equity is this, that so much of *your* labor as I take and apply to *my* benefit, so much of *my* labor ought I to give to you to be applied to your benefit; and, consequently, if I take a product of your labor instead of the labor itself, and pay you in product of my labor, the commodity which I give you ought to be one in which there is *just as much labor* as there is in the product which I receive." [70] "Just as much labor," however, did not mean just as much time, but rather the embodiment of just as much "hardness" or "repugnance." The method of measuring this was simple: "All that is necessary is to agree upon some particular kind of labor the average repugnance of which is most easily ascertained, or the most nearly fixed, and use it as *a standard of comparison,* a sort of *yard stick,* for measuring the relative repugnance of other kinds of labor." While "each individual must make his or her own estimate of the repugnance to him or her of the particular labour which he or she performs," yet Andrews' assumption seems to be that the estimates will be so nearly alike that the exchange of products will be but a simple matter.[71]

Continuing this line of argument, he shows the need of some means of exchange which would adequately represent the measure of repugnance, since exchanges of the products themselves

69 Andrews, *True Constitution of Government*, 14.

70 Andrews, *Cost the Limit of Price*, 67.

71 *Ibid.*, 68.

by means of barter cannot always be made on the spot. His proposal to meet this need is the familiar Labour Note to take the place of the existing systems of exchange. This note will be considered as a "new species of paper money, based solely upon individual responsibility." [72] It might be issued by a storekeeper, to cover not only what he could redeem in his own labour, but to cover the goods on his shelves and the notes of his customers which he would naturally have in his possession. In this manner a common medium of exchange would be created which could be extended over any territory, calling into service the creation of banks where necessary, but not permitting exchanges to deviate from the cost principle.[73]

Such a system of exchange makes every one independent of every one else and produces a society in which "there is no compact or constitution — no laws, by-laws, rules or regulations of any sort. The Individual is kept above all institutions, out of deference to the principle of Individuality and the Sovereignty of the Individual which belong just as much to the fundamental basis of true society as the Cost Principle itself." [74] Under such a system competition itself will cease to be antagonistic and will become co-operative, "for it will be to the positive interest of every workman to be thrown out of his own business by the competition of any one who can do the same labour better and cheaper." [75] Co-operative production will develop, but only because of its economies. It will be entirely voluntary and any member may withdraw at any time.

The wage system would continue, because men are created to perform different functions, some to lead, others to follow. Hence, "*naturally,* each is content with the performance of his own function, according to his organization. . . . It is right that one man employ another, it is right that he pay him wages, and it is right that he direct him absolutely, arbitrarily, if you will, in the performance of his labor, while, on the other hand, it is the business of him who is employed implicitly to obey, that is, to surrender any will of his own in relation to a design not his own, and to conceive and execute the will of the other." [76] Yet the wage-earner would perhaps receive a greater

72 *Ibid.*, 70.
73 *Ibid.*, 71.
74 *Ibid.*, 65.
75 *Ibid.*, 166.
76 *Ibid.*, 209.

return than his employer because the repugnance of the latter's work would be much less than that of the former.[77]

Andrews did not claim simplicity for his plan. He urged upon his followers that if they agitated loudly and long enough the public would finally adopt their principles, "more by precedence and iteration than the full comprehension of them."[78] He never had a distinct following which amounted to an organisation, yet it was through him that American anarchism was handed down to the decade of the seventies.[79]

Another radical of this revolutionary period was Edward Kellogg, who published his scheme of government notes in 1843, in an essay entitled *Usury, the Evil and the Remedy.* It was favourably reviewed in the New York *Tribune*[80] and in 1849 appeared with additions in book form, under the title of *Labour and Other Capital; the Rights of Each Secured and the Wrongs of Both Eradicated* (New York, 1849). Kellogg was listened to but disregarded by the Industrial Congress of New York City. He also, like the others, would reduce the rate of interest to the labour-cost of conducting the banking system, but, unlike them, he would depend on government banking, not on mutual banking. Twenty years later his book was resurrected and published in large numbers, and became the economic philosophy of the "Greenbackism" of 1867.[81]

BUILDING ASSOCIATIONS

Taking advantage of the demand of the land reformers[82] for "homes for all" and of the general outcry against extortion by city landlords, a third group of reformers sought the remedy for high rents also in co-operation rather than in legislation. In 1850 the idea of model lodging-houses was just finding its way into England. A few such were tried in America, being built and equipped by philanthropists. But even if a few successful enterprises of this sort were established, they could but touch the circumference of the evil. A more far-reaching change was needed. Three solutions were proposed. The first was an adaptation of the community system of living, proposed by the

77 *Ibid.*, 212.
78 Speech in New York City Industrial Congress, Mar. 15, 1851.
79 See below, II, 138 *et seq.*
80 Aug. 17, 1843.
81 See below, II, 119 *et seq.*, for Kellogg's theory and its application.
82 See below, I, 521 *et seq.*

associationists. It took the form of "unitary" dwellings so constructed as to take advantage of combined building without sacrificing the seclusion of the family circle. The Philadelphia Unitary Building Association,[83] organised in 1849, contemplated the erection of a sectional dwelling, the centre to be constructed first and additions made on either side as more funds were provided. Such schemes were to be financed on the joint-stock principle, assessments and dividends to be in proportion to the amount of stock held. The second solution was the mutual building and loan association. This system was first introduced into America in 1840,[84] but it did not gain much support until about 1849. For a few years thereafter it spread through the Atlantic seaboard States and was a factor in the labour movements. The entrance fee to these associations varied from $1 to $5 and the dues from 50 cents to $2 per week. The following announcement of the Manhattan Building Association is an example of the methods usually employed:

"As often as the funds amount to eight hundred dollars, (one share) such share is to be sold at the next meeting of the Association, and the member offering the highest premium is entitled to the privilege of employing that amount, either in purchasing or in building for himself a house, which he mortgages to the Society to secure due payment of his subscription and interest. The premiums and interest received from shares advanced to the members are added to the general fund, and distributed in the same manner." [85]

Finally, it was proposed simply to sell the land to the workingman on easy payments and to leave the building of the house entirely to him. Such a plan is described in the following advertisement:

"Do your own landlording — Workingmen who find it expensive and uncomfortable to have their work done by others, are informed that the New York Industrial Home Association on seventy-five dollars in weekly installments of one dollar being paid into the Treasury by each member, guarantees to each one-quarter acre of land within forty minutes' distance from this city. Number of members limited to one thousand, each one to improve within three years." [86]

83 *Spirit of the Age*, Dec. 29, 1849.

84 Wrigley, *The Workingman's Way to Wealth*, 7. See also "Building and Loan Associations," in Commissioner of Labor, *Ninth Annual Report*, 1893.

85 New York *Tribune*, Apr. 30, 1851.

86 *Ibid.*, Aug. 16, 1850.

At first, such associations were managed by trustees who held the deeds to the property. Many abuses arose. The legislatures of the various States were then called upon to authorise and regulate building and loan associations, which thus have become lasting co-operative organisations handed down from the decade of the forties.[87]

87 Wrigley, *The Workingman's Way to Wealth*, 7.

CHAPTER III

THE NEW AGRARIANISM [1]

Evans' return to the labour movement, 522. New agrarianism based upon reason, 522. Supremacy of individualism, 523. Inalienability of land, 523. Evans and slavery, 525. Evans' ideas revolutionary, 525. Free land the basis of all freedom, 526. Supposed inexhaustibility of free land, 526. Effect of free land upon wages, 527. Evans and Walsh, 527. Walsh originates gang system of politics, 528. Evans' confidence in Walsh, 529. Evans' plan of political action, 530. National Reform Association organised, 531. Land reform and trade unionism, 531. Land reform press, 532. General press and land reform, 533. Kriege and land reform, 534. Social Reform Association, 534. German land reformers and politics, 535.

The workingmen's party of New York, in 1829, had declared itself in favour of the equal division of all property, including land and capital, and this doctrine was known as agrarianism. It was soon repudiated by the party, but the strikes of 1835 and 1836 brought it forward in a new form. Although the strikes were successful yet their very success served to attract labour from the country districts to share in the increased wages of the cities. Without the protection of the "closed shop," the leaders began to look to a means of escape from the seaboard cities to the public domain of the West.[2] After the panic of 1837 George Henry Evans, the editor of the *Working Man's Advocate,* retired to a farm in New Jersey, and began to formulate anew the principles of agrarianism. He published in 1840 a *History of the Origin and Progress of the Working Men's Party in New York,* as a warning against the mistakes of that time and a preparation for a new agrarianism. The revival of unions in 1844 brought him back to New York with his printing press and his new *Working Man's Advocate.*[3] This time, agrarianism in its new form had become his substitute for strikes, as well as a universal panacea. It was brought forth in opposition to the doctrines of association, Fourierism, and

1 Credit is due to Carl Hookstadt, for his monographic study, *A History and Analysis of the Homestead Movement, 1840–1862.*

2 See above, I, 428.

3 Published in 1844–1845 under that name, and changed later to *Young America.*

Owenism. Those doctrines were socialistic importations from Europe. Agrarianism was the direct successor to the individualistic democracy of Thomas Paine[4] and Thomas Jefferson. It employed the same theories of natural rights to overthrow the power of landed property that they had employed to overthrow the British rule in America. The line of argument was as follows: Man's right to life is the source of all other rights. Since he lives, he has a right to be. This implies a right to use the materials of nature necessary for being. These are light, air, water, and soil. These are man's natural material rights. All others, such as liberty, labour, capital, and education, are acquired or derived.

This is the distinction between the new agrarianism and the old. Men do not have an equal right to *capital,* because it is a product of labour and not a gift of nature. The older agrarianism did not make this distinction. Both capital and land were to be equally divided. Now, only land was to be divided.

A natural right has three cardinal points, not pertaining to rights that are acquired through labour or the products which labour creates. These are equality, inalienability, and individuality.

Equality is perceived, not by observation, but by reason. Each individual is a unit and is, therefore, entitled to an equal share in the earth which belongs to all. Inalienability guarantees over a period of time the rights which equality assures over space on the earth's surface. No individual can be deprived of, or give title to, or place a mortgage upon, his natural rights. Alienation would nullify equality. The third cardinal point is individuality, or separateness. Nature recognises the individual — not the family, the community, or the nation — as the unit. Natural rights must be guaranteed to the individual else they will be usurped by associations or corporations, resulting in alienation and inequality.

Carried to its logical limit this doctrine would lead to anarchism, and such was the outcome in the hands of Lewis Masquerier, one of Evans' first disciples. Evans checked his individualism, in the case of children, by denying them indi-

[4] Evans, in 1837, edited an edition of Paine's writings. Paine's plan for a land tax, to be used for old age pensions, is set forth in his *Agrarian Justice opposed to Agrarian Law and Agrarian Monopoly.*

viduality before the age of twenty-one. Likewise, in practice, the family would be the unit, on the family homestead. But Masquerier would give the wife her half, to which she could retire "for the purpose of preserving her individual rights and independence from the tyranny of the husband." [5]

With these three intrinsic qualities of natural rights assured, individualism assumes a new and impregnable position. It becomes superior and prior even to liberty, for it is not a denial of true liberty to deny the individual the right to sell his natural rights. Indeed, the freedom of alienation is curtailed in the interests of liberty. The individual becomes proof against oppression because he can always turn to nature for subsistence. Thus private property becomes synonymous with liberty and opportunity of self-employment. The law of nature finds its essence in private property. It plants the individual as a sovereign upon his own share of the universe; it permits no dispossession either through fear, necessity, or the persuasion of an apparent good bargain; it gives him no advantage through control of the forced labour of others; it throws him on his own resources and leaves his destiny to his own efforts; it guarantees nature's rights by imposing nature's law of self-support; it exalts the individual by depriving him of power over other individuals and by denying others power over him. Just as the law of primogeniture preserved the power of aristocracy in England, so inalienability would perpetuate democracy in America.

Thus the right to land was different from the right to capital. One may obtain capital by producing it, by gift, or by exchange. Consequently, the tests of equality, inalienability, and individuality do not apply to capital. However, the producer must not have encroached upon the natural right of any other man in producing it The exchange or gift must be voluntary in every sense and must be made by men in possession of *all* their natural rights. Here the issue was joined with the associationists who would admit to their communities a capitalist class living without labour on the returns of their invested stock.

The associationists and communists also made much of the

5 Masquerier, *Sociology: or the Reconstruction of Society, Government and Property*, 49. Masquerier was a native of Kentucky. He had abandoned the communism of Owen for the individualism of Evans.

"right of labor." To Brisbane this right was fundamental because, "if men were created to go through a course of existence, which is dependent on labor, if its right be not guaranteed him, his right to existence even is not acknowledged." [6] Upon this right depends the right to land, to utensils of labour, to education, and to the enjoyment of the products of his own labour. To this Evans replied that the right to labour is secured if one has the right to land.[7] Yet Fourierism and association were not primarily concerned with rights, because harmony of interests and "attractive industry" would so enormously increase the production of wealth that labour would not miss the share given to capital. Evans replied that the greatest stimulus to wealth production was private property.

So it was with the right to personal liberty. William Lloyd Garrison had appealed for immediate emancipation at the time when Evans first appealed for free land. The northern wage-earners had but little sympathy for the southern Negroes, and the appeals of Garrison met with indifference or even hostility. Evans sought to explain the attitude of wage-earners towards slavery on the ground that in their case a greater natural right was violated. The real slaves were the wage-slaves of the cities, and their masters were those who deprived them of their natural right to land. Equal right to the soil must precede the abolition of slavery, else personal freedom to the slave would mean only a change of masters.[8]

The doctrine of natural right to the soil, while less radical than the schemes of Owen and Brisbane, was more revolutionary. It was a distinct appeal to workmen to enlist as a class against a propertied class. Both Owenism and associationism avoided class conflict. Evans welcomed it, and, though an individualist, appealed for class action to establish individualism. Not Brisbane, as already suggested,[9] with his harmony of interests, his voluntary co-operation, and his repudiation of politics, is the forerunner of modern socialism, but the agrarianism of Evans with its resort to class struggle.

Existing governments protect the propertied classes in their

6 Brisbane, *Social Destiny of Man*, 111.

7 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Dec. 28, 1844.

8 *Ibid.*, July 6, 1844. Cfr. Schlüter, *Lincoln, Labor and Slavery, passim.*

9 See above, I, 497 *et seq.*

usurpation of the rights of the wage-earners. The usurpers would not give up their power voluntarily; therefore, it must be wrested from them by organised action. And since legislation controls land distribution, the poor must wield their power as a class in politics. With universal suffrage, the equal right to land could be "carried by vote." Yet "government should simply secure rights and leave the rest to the people." [10]

Free trade, free labour, the abolition of slavery, were ultimate objects, but free land, or equal right to the soil, must first be established. But even this was inadvisable in the older States, because it would lead to violence in the expropriation of existing owners. The case was different with the public domain. There the theory could be tried out and afterwards could be applied to the older States. Instead of revolution he would have three "sliding measures," freedom of the public lands, homestead exemption, and land limitation. The first would secure individuality in ownership, the second, inalienability, the third, equality.[11]

As late as 1852, debaters in Congress pointed out that in the preceding sixty years only 100,000,000 acres of the public lands had been sold, and that 1,400,000,000 acres still remained at the disposal of the Government. Estimates of the required time to dispose of this residuum at the then rate of sale varied from 400 or 500 to 900 years. With such exaggerated views prevalent, it is not surprising that Evans should lay plans for a thousand years, "leaving the people at the end of that period to make a new arrangement, if necessary, in accordance with the principle of equal right which we propose to establish."

This much conceded, it did not require a serious stretch of the imagination to picture the results which must follow. The landless wage-earners could be furnished transportation and an outfit, for the money spent for poor relief would be more profitably expended in sending the poor to the land. Private societies and trade unions, when labourers were too numerous, could aid in transporting the surplus to the waiting homesteads. The land would be more thickly settled than it would be where specu-

10 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Dec. 28, 1844.

11 Masquerier, *Sociology: or the Reconstruction of Society, Government and Property*, 112.

lators held vast tracts, and roads, schools, mills, and markets would flourish and attract labour.

With the immobility of labour thus offering no serious obstacle to the execution of the plan, the wage-earners of the East would have the option of continuing to work for wages or of taking up their share of the vacant lands. Enough at least would accept the latter to force employers to offer better wages and shorter hours. Those unable to meet the expense of moving would profit by higher wages at home. With the opening of western lands to settlers, the price of land held by speculators would fall. Eventually, after the older States adopted land limitation, the value of all land would disappear. This must result, else the older States would be drained of their population. As a consequence, the value of all land would be simply the value of the improvements placed upon it.

In February, 1844, Evans began the publication of his second *Working Man's Advocate* in New York.

Evans formed a partnership with his friend and fellow-printer of the Loco-Foco period, John Windt, of whom he speaks as "one of the best of printers and most honest and self-sacrificing of men." Windt was prominent in the Loco-Foco party as an "ultra anti-monopolist" and steadfastly followed this cause against all overtures for compromise and coalition. He did not continue long as a partner of Evans, but became active as secretary and afterwards as treasurer of the National Reform Association. He was prominent as a lecturer at meetings of wage-earners and was sent as a delegate to various industrial congresses.

At the time when he began to publish the *Working Man's Advocate* Evans began also a tri-weekly paper, *The People's Rights,* using the same articles in both papers. After three months *The People's Rights* was enlarged and continued for a few months longer. Evans then entered upon an unfortunate partnership with Mike Walsh, publisher of *The Subterranean,* and the two papers were consolidated for a period of three months. Walsh was one of those enigmatic characters that spring up at a time of social and political agitation. He was born in Ireland [12] and came to America as a small boy. He

12 For a brief biography, see Appleton's *Cyclopædia of American Biography,* VI, 340; Forney, *Anecdotes of Public Men,* 113.

spent his youth as a wanderer, and, after his retirement from Congress in 1855, reverted to his youthful habits, spending most of the remaining four years of his life in tramping over Europe and Mexico. Penniless and dissipated, he died in the yard of a New York public house, March 17, 1859. Walsh is credited by Myers in his *History of Tammany Hall* with being the originator in the year 1842 of the "gang" system of professional "ward heelers." "Walsh," says Myers, "had no claim at all on the ruling politicians at the wigwam, and would have been unnoticed by them. But he was ambitious, did not lack ability of a certain kind, and had a retinue of devoted 'plug-ugly' followers. He spoke with a homely eloquence, which captivated the poor of his ward. The turbulent he won over with his fists. . . . Seeing how easy it was to force nominations at the wigwam, if backed by force, other men began to imitate him and get together 'gangs' of their own." [13]

At the time of his alliance with Evans in the fall of 1844, Walsh's famous "Spartan Band," probably referred to by Myers, had been outclassed and superseded by Rynder's "Empire Club," and to them Walsh, in the *Working Man's Advocate,* devoted a column of his eloquent imprecation. Walsh's command of the English language can be characterised by no term short of staggering; his egotism was unlimited and unconscious. He had a faculty of taking hold of everything that came along that seemed democratic. At the second meeting called by Evans, Walsh was present as a listener and was loudly called for. He made such an "able address" that he was unanimously voted the compliment of a request to be the first to sign his name to the pledge. This he did, and followed it up in the *Subterranean,* declaring that freedom of the public lands was a measure which his Spartan Association had endorsed three years before, and one which he was "determined to now go into heart, hand and soul, to the exclusion (if needs be) of every other subject." [14]

Speaking of his Spartan Band, organised in 1840, Walsh writes in the *Advocate,*[15] "It is composed almost exclusively of

[13] Myers, *History of Tammany Hall,* 154.

[14] Quoted in New York *Working Man's Advocate,* Mar. 30, 1844.

[15] Nov. 2, 1844.

honest, hard-working young men who are dependent solely on the labour of their own hands for a subsistence. . . . They are Radical in everything, and every advancement in principle which has been adopted during the last four years originated with, and was fought by them into popularity, long before the political trimmers of Tammany Hall dared to subscribe to it." Speaking [16] of the Empire Club organised four years later, he names them "a gang of hireling ruffians organized by the depraved and mercenary office-holding Hunkers of Tammany Hall . . . and have been kept ever since by them in victuals, clothes, money and rum, to commit outrage upon such defenceless grey-headed citizens, cripples and apple women, as may be found bold and unguarded enough to openly express an opinion conflicting with the wishes or mandates of their Hunker employers, and also to multiply their votes as often as possible on the day of election."

It was the Spartan Band that joined with the National Reform Association to send Walsh and Evans as delegates to the Working Men's Convention at Boston in 1844, in order to induce that body to add land reform to its list of demands. Speaking of Walsh's address at that convention, the Boston *Investigator* said,[17] "We have heard many eloquent speeches in our day, but we never before listened to an address, from old or young, more full of genuine pathos, correct knowledge, and forcible description, than that from this young champion of the New York Spartans." Evans was thoroughly convinced of Walsh's integrity. In announcing the union of the two papers he said: "One man only in this city, since 1835, has had the mind to see, the honesty to embrace, the nerve to advocate, and the self-devotion to print the great truths that are to redeem the downtrodden masses, and that man is Mike Walsh. Others have possessed some of these requisites, but he alone has possessed all. True, he has been villified; and it would not be one of the wonders of the world if he *had* some faults or *had* committed some youthful indiscretions. Without taking the trouble to investigate this point, I can afford to admit such charges, and then, after balancing accounts, claim for him a remainder of many

[16] *Ibid.*, Oct. 19, 1844.
[17] New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Oct. 26, 1844.

more good qualities than those who make the charges even make pretension to." [18] Even after Walsh withdrew from the alliance, three months later, with the charge that Evans had suppressed a portion of an editorial written by himself while in jail,[19] Evans still was able to say that no difference existed between them as to principles. The real difficulty was that Walsh took so much space with his diatribes and his denunciations of every individual case of oppression and political infamy, that Evans did not have space enough for the movement which he thought all important. He defended Walsh while in jail as the victim of "gross injustice only to be accounted for by political hostility and chicanery," [20] but never afterward was he diverted from the single purpose of holding his paper strictly to land reform.

This episode is significant as showing the kind of serious obstacles Evans had continually to meet in directing the attention of workingmen to the importance of the public lands. His own patient methods and his search for a fundamental reform were going on almost unnoticed beneath the turmoil of corrupt politics and hysterical democracy. His slight gains were again and again set aside by a brilliant and erratic demagogue like Walsh, or by a hundred passing events that stirred the masses for the moment. Walsh resumed the publication of his *Subterranean* and continued it for a couple of years. He was elected to the state assembly and in 1852, in company with other Tammany leaders, succeeded in capturing the New York City Industrial Congress for Tammany. This sent Walsh to Congress for one term from 1853 to 1855.

Evans pursued his steadfast course until a really national movement was set on foot. At the end of the first volume, in 1845, he changed the name of his paper to *Young America*, and was publishing the latter paper as late as May, 1849.[21]

When Evans returned to New York in 1844, he had formulated a plan of political action. His previous political experiences had taught him that a minority party could not hope to win by its own votes, and that the politicians cared more for

18 *Ibid.*, Oct. 12, 1844.

19 Walsh served two years in prison for printing a scandal involving a political enemy in the *Subterranean*.

20 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Dec. 21, 1844.

21 Quoted in New York *Tribune*, May 30, 1849.

offices than for measures. They would endorse any measures which had enough determined advocates to hold the balance of power. His plan of action was, therefore, to ask all candidates to pledge their support to his "sliding measures." In exchange for such a pledge, the candidates would receive the votes of the workingmen. In case no candidate for a particular office signed the pledge, it might be necessary to nominate an independent as a warning to future candidates, but not as an indication of a new party organisation.

In order to systematise this programme, Evans, assisted by Windt, Devyr, Pyne,[22] Masquerier, and Maxwell, formulated what they called the pledge of the Agrarian League, as follows: "We, whose names are annexed, desirous of restoring to man his Natural Right to Land, do solemnly agree that we will not vote for any man, for any legislative office, who will not pledge himself, in writing, to use all the influence of his station, if elected, to prevent all further traffic in the Public Lands of the states and of the United States, and to cause them to be laid out in Farms and Lots for the free and exclusive use of actual settlers." [23] Although the name of the League was changed to "National Reform Association," this pledge was retained with an addition four years later of the following words: "Or for any man for the Governorship or the Legislature who will not so pledge himself to the Freedom of the Public Lands, to a limitation of the quantity of land to be obtained by any individual hereafter in this State, to the exemption of the Homestead from any future debt or mortgage, and to a limitation to ten of the hours of daily labor on public works or in establishments chartered by law." [24]

The new organisation showed clearly its connection with the trade unions and political movements of 1829 to 1836. The first central committee included four printers, two cordwainers, a chair maker, a carpenter, a blacksmith, a bookbinder, a machinist, a picture-frame maker, and a clothier. One of the members, James Pyne, had belonged to the vigilance commit-

22 James A. Pyne appeared as early as 1830 as a member of the vigilance committee of the Working Men's party of the Eighth Ward. In 1836 he was a delegate to the county convention of the Loco-Foco party.

23 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Mar. 18, 1844.

24 *Young America*, Sept. 23, 1848; see also *Doc. Hist.*, VII, 312.

tee of the Working Men's party in 1830, and was a delegate to the county convention of the Loco Foco party in 1836. Another, John Commerford, had been secretary of the National Trades' Union in 1834, president of the General Trades' Union of New York in 1835, and afterwards editor of *The Union,* the official organ of the latter.

In western Pennsylvania, John Ferral, hand loom weaver and leader of the Philadelphia Trades' Union of 1835, organised in 1844, at Pittsburgh, a branch of the National Reform Association.

Besides these trade union leaders, there were others of different origins. Thomas A. Devyr, an Irish exile, became widely known for his platform eloquence.[25] Next to Evans, the most active leader was Alvan E. Bovay, who afterwards moved to Wisconsin, and organised at Ripon in that State in 1854 what is claimed to have been the first conference of Whigs, Democrats, and Free Soilers that adopted the name Republican party.[26] His career, compared with that of Masquerier, mentioned above, indicates the extremes of the Agrarian League. Beginning, in 1844, with the "natural and inalienable" rights of agrarianism, Masquerier went off into anarchism, but Bovay helped to form in 1854 a political party to resist, not slavery, but the encroachments of the slave power on the public lands.

It was estimated in 1845 that 2,000 papers were published in the United States,[27] and that in 1850, 600 of these supported land reform.[28] During the first two or three years such support had been meagre. The panic of 1837 obliterated the labour press and it was not until seven years later that a new crop began to appear. With the appearance of the *Operative* at Manchester, New Hampshire, on December 30, 1843, the

25 Devyr had been an agrarian agitator in Ireland until forced to flee to America. He had published a book in Ireland, *Our National Rights*, and afterwards edited and published in New York the periodicals, the *National Reformer* and *Anti-Renter*. On the "anti-rent" movement in New York, see Murray, "The Anti-Rent Episode in the State of New York," in American Historical Association, *Annual Report*, 1896, I, 139–173.

26 See Curtis, *History of the Republican Party*, I, 173, 174; Butterfield, *History of Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin*, 886; *Doc. Hist.*, VII, 36, 37; Commons, *Labor and Administration*, chap. iv; "Horace Greeley and the Working Class Origins of the Republican Party," in *Political Science Quarterly*, XXIV, 468–488. Unlike Evans, Bovay's political antecedents were Whig.

27 New York *Herald*, May 8, 1845.

28 Evans, *Autobiography of a Shaker*, 18. Evans the Shaker was a brother of Evans the agrarian.

wage-earner again placed his grievances on record. Within six months this was followed by the *Working Man's Advocate* (New York), the *Mechanic* (Fall River), the Lowell *Operative,* the *Laborer* (Boston), and the *Awl* (the diminutive organ of the Lynn cordwainers). Except the *Advocate,* all of these papers traced their origin to the agitation for a ten-hour day. With the appearance of the *Advocate* on their exchange list, the plea for land reform was added to the appeal for a shorter work-day. Within a year, the reform press in sections as distant as Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, and Maine accepted Evans' ideas. In Philadelphia, the eccentric novelist, George Lippard, established the *Quaker City* in 1848, and organised the Brotherhood of the Union, a secret organisation for the defence of labour and the propaganda of land reform. It spread rapidly to twenty-three States, and exists at the present time as a benevolent order. In the West, Lucius A. Hine, a printer connected with the co-operative paper, the Cincinnati *Nonpareil,* took up the reform and, besides issuing many publications, he travelled through several States, and is said to have delivered no less than 350 lectures on the subject.[29]

The attitude of the general newspapers, especially in the East, was at first indifferent, then hostile. In August, 1844, six months after the appearance of the Working Man's *Advocate,* the *Tribune,* the *Express,* the *Courier,* and the *Sun,* all learned through their exchanges that an "agrarian league" was said to have been formed in New York. Their silence on the question was not broken until early in 1845. The hoped-for opposition came in response to an article published in January in the *Democratic Review,* demanding a revolutionary change in property rights.[30] This article aroused the *Sun* to cry out for "men of all parties . . . to PUT DOWN doctrines which strike at the root of the Social System."[31] The *Commercial* responded by castigating agrarianism as the bad brother of "lovely Fourierism." Shortly after this time, Greeley, in the New York *Tribune,* endorsed vigorously what

[29] New York *Tribune,* Mar. 4, 1853.

[30] "What is the Reason? How much Land and Property, and I have none!" *Democratic Review,* January, 1845, cited in New York *Working Man's Advocate,* Jan. 11, 1845.

[31] *Ibid.,* Feb. 15, 1845.

he had at first considered the radical demands of the National Reformers.[32]

The agrarian movement was taken up by the German immigrants and especially by the communists who fled to America prior to the Revolution of 1848. Herman Kriege had been a member, in Europe, of the *Bund der Gerechten* (Society of the Just), a secret organisation founded by German workingmen in Paris in 1836. Weitling was its leading spirit until 1847, when Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels gained control. Marx had characterised the organisation as a "mixture of French-English socialism and German philosophy." Along with the secret organisation was a larger open union which served as a recruiting agent for the inner secret circle. Kriege, in 1845, found the Germans in America ready for organisation. In fact, a considerable group of German communists had preceded him, and, in Philadelphia, were already publishing a paper which they called the *Adoptiv-Bürger;* while, in St. Louis, Koch had some time before Kriege's arrival begun the publication of his *Anti-Pfaff* and *Vorwärts.* At the same time, the land reformers were beginning to win converts. A coincidence served to influence Kriege in the direction of this American agitation. On October 20, 1845, a short while after Kriege landed, a group of German land reformers had asked the "German Society of New York," an immigrant aid society composed of well-to-do Germans, to take the initiative in forming a German reform association to co-operate with the National Reform Association. No reply was given to this request, but the workingmen themselves called such a meeting and heard the principles of land reform discussed.[33] Kriege attended this meeting and thereafter became an ardent advocate of land reform.

At a second meeting the "Social Reform Association" was formed to do for the German workingmen what the National Reform Association hoped to do for the English-speaking Americans. There was, however, one essential difference in the two organisations. Both advocated land reform. But the latter, under the leadership of Evans, looked to land reform as an end; the former, under Kriege, was essentially communistic

32 *Doc. Hist.*, VII, 34.

33 *Volks-Tribun*, Jan. 17, 1846.

and viewed land reform as a necessary step.[34] Kriege was cautious about advocating a scheme of reform which would result in a second uprising of "Native" Americans against "Vagabond" foreigners. Yet at the expense of expulsion from the *Bund der Gerechten* by Marx, Kriege accepted land reform. In answer to his critics he maintained that he was still a communist and hoped by land reform not so much to establish individualism as to overthrow monopoly. This, he considered, must be the first step towards communism in America.

Kriege reorganised his Society of the Just under the name of Young America, and made it the inner circle of the Social Reform Association. On January 5, 1846, he began the publication of the *Volks-Tribun* as the official organ of the Association, and of all social-political societies in the United States. Other German societies of land reformers were organised in Milwaukee, Cincinnati, Boston, Newark, Philadelphia, Chicago, and St. Louis.

At the time the first meeting of German land reformers was called in October, 1845, a municipal election was pending in New York. The Tammany politicians came into this meeting and tried to control it for their own purposes. Their efforts were unsuccessful at the time, but Kriege pledged the German vote to Tammany as soon as the Democratic party should bind itself to secure land reform.[35] This Tammany did just before the November elections of 1846 at a mass meeting held on October 30.[36] This was not a presidential year, however, and little interest was taken in the election by the workingmen.

The further development of the homestead movement will appear [37] after we have traced the beginnings of the ten-hour movement, with which it became affiliated.

34 *Ibid.*, Apr. 11, 1848.
35 *Ibid.*, May 2, 1846.
36 *Ibid.*, Nov. 7, 1846.
37 See below, I, 562 *et seq.*

CHAPTER IV

THE TEN HOUR MOVEMENT

Ten hours by law, 536. Legislative reports on hours, 537. New England Working Men's Association, 537. Associationists gain control, 538. Lowell Female Labour Reform Association, 539. Legislative investigation of factory hours, 540. Corporation influence charged, 541. Ten-hour law in New Hampshire, 541. Ten-hour bill in New York, 542. Ten-hour legislation in Pennsylvania, 543. Ten-hour legislation in other States, 543. Changing character of factory labourers, 544. Change of basis for shorter hours, 544. "Make work" argument for shorter hours, 546.

THE movement for shorter hours during the forties and fifties proceeded along two distinct lines — one legislative, the other trade union. The one was the outgrowth of the humanitarian agitation and was developed during the forties; the other took the form of trade union demands and did not become prominent until the early fifties.[1]

After the appeal of the National Trades' Union to Congress for legislation limiting the hours of labour had failed [2] and after the appeal of the humanitarians to the employers to follow the example set by President Van Buren in limiting the hours of government work had produced no widespread results, the ten-hour agitation again linked itself with politics. As early as 1842 an attempt was made to bring pressure upon the legislature of Massachusetts by petitioning the general court for a ten-hour law.[3] Most of these petitions were headed "The Ten-Hour Republican Association," indicating the existence of some sort of organisation. The demand at that time was for a law which would merely standardise the working day at ten hours except in cases of special contract.[4] It

1 See below, I. 575 *et seq.*

2 See above, I. 395.

3 Persons, "The Early History of Factory Legislation in Massachusetts: From 1825 to the Passage of the Ten Hour Law in 1874," in *Labor Laws and their Enforcement, with special reference to Massachusetts*, 24 *et seq.*

4 A petition from Lowell alone did not. This petition also asked that the law apply to "manufacturing corporations." The reason for this is obvious, since the factories were the source of long hours. Also, corporations were the creatures of the legislature, and it was believed that the legislatures had more power to regulate them. *Ibid.*, 25.

was believed that the moral effect of such a law would be to prohibit work-days longer than ten hours, even by contract.

In 1843 a special joint committee of the Massachusetts legislature reported a bill embodying the contract exemption, but it appears that no action was taken. In the next year the Mechanics' Association of Fall River opened a more aggressive campaign for a ten-hour law and called together a general convention of the mechanics of New England to devise plans for concert of action on a shorter working day.

The call [5] to this convention was addressed to "brethren and friends abroad" and "to the Mechanics of New England particularly." In justifying the convention, the call declared "the system of labor . . . requiring of the mechanic and laborer of New England from twelve to fifteen hours of labor per diem is more than the physical constitution of man can bear, generally speaking, and preserve a healthy state. . . ." [6] Furthermore, "The time has never been since the adoption of the present system, when public sympathies have been awakened, and when a general interest has been created to such an extent in behalf of the working classes, as at the present time."

In response to this call, the first preliminary convention of the New England Working Men's Association met in Boston in October, 1844. In addition to numerous mechanics from the New England cities, many reformers [7] attended the convention to take advantage of this opportunity to enlist the workingmen in the spread of their own ideas. Evans, Devyr, and Bovay from the land reformers, Walsh from the Spartan Band, and Ripley, Godwin, and Ryckman from the associationists came to Boston and took a prominent part in the proceedings. With Evans, shorter hours had never been a matter of indifference. He had always favoured a strike for shorter hours, though opposing strikes for higher wages as illusory and temporary. On this account, when the ten-hour movement took legislative form, Evans readily coupled the limitation of hours with the limitations of land ownership. Likewise Walsh will-

5 Printed in the *Mechanic*, the organ of the Fall River Association. A Doctor Nelson was a leader in this movement and helped to frame the policy of the organisation.

6 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, June 29, 1844; reprinted from the *Mechanic*. See *Doc. Hist.*, VIII, 86–89.

7 One such, Horace Seaver, editor of the Boston *Investigator*, an anti-religious publication, was refused admittance.

ingly championed the ten-hour movement because it promised to interest mechanics in politics. While favouring a ten-hour day, the associationists, on the other hand, opposed legislative action. But, being in the minority in this convention, they failed to prevent the passage of a resolution in favour of memorialising the legislatures asking for a ten-hour law. Other resolutions passed at this first convention recommended association and land reform.[8]

The first convention, while clearly called for the purpose of determining ways and means to secure a shorter working day, had, in its minority, elements of both land reform and association. In the second convention, which met in Lowell in March, 1845, the associationists were more largely represented and dominated the meetings. The land reformers had withdrawn after failing to bring the convention to New York. While the election of men to the General Court of Massachusetts who would protect the interests of the workingmen was recommended, no memorials to existing legislatures were sanctioned. Instead, the workingmen were urged to raise a fund "against the time when one or more associations shall attempt the adoption of the Ten-Hour system."[9] Other subjects such as corporation charters, lien law, popular education, and land reform were given consideration. Brisbane was present at the Lowell convention and took a prominent part in the discussion. Ryckman of Brook Farm was made president and other prominent associationists were made members of important committees.

On May 28, 1845, the New England Working Men's Association met again in Boston,[10] the associationists dominating, as in the second convention. The discussion was limited to "those interested in the elevation of the Producing Classes, and Industrial Reform." Robert Owen, from England, W. H. Channing, and Greeley were among the speakers. At the fourth convention[11] at Fall River in September, 1845, two forces combined to wrest the control of the organisation from the associationists. Those associationists who had dominated the two preceding conventions were now giving their attention

8 *The Awl*, Oct. 23, 1844, reprinted from the Boston *Daily Bee*; *Doc. Hist.*, VIII, 95–99.

9 *Awl*, Apr. 5, 1845; *Doc. Hist.*, VIII, 99–106.

10 *Voice of Industry*, June 12, 1845; *Doc. Hist.*, VIII, 106–119.

11 *Voice of Industry*, Sept. 18, 1845; also Proceedings in *Ibid.*, September, 1845; *Doc. Hist.*, VIII, 119–125.

to the coming Industrial Congress, and the mechanics in the convention were beginning to tire of the doctrines of "attractive industry." A third determinant may have had some influence in shifting the control of the convention — the change of the place of meeting back to Fall River. At any rate, the delegates attending the September meeting confined their attention to two subjects, political action and co-operative stores, which they endorsed. The political element, influenced by the doctrine of "natural rights," subordinated all else to its ideas. More and more attention was given to free land, free trade, and anti-monopoly. At the Nashua convention,[12] in September, 1846, the name of the organisation was changed to Labor Reform League of New England. The discussion on shorter hours was again a subordinate topic and was limited to public employment only. The League met again in Boston in January, 1847.[13] Soon after, the members who advocated co-operative stores became absorbed in the New England Protective Union movement, while the other elements went into the industrial congresses. By 1849 the entire association had disappeared.

While the New England Working Men's Association was attempting to reduce the hours of mechanics, another organisation, contemporaneous in development and related to it, was giving its attention to the hours of women in factories. In January, 1845, the "factory girls" of Lowell under the leadership of Sarah G. Bagley[14] formed the Lowell Female Labour Reform Association for the purpose of perfecting plans to shorten their working day, declaring that "such unmitigated labor is to the highest degree destructive to the health . . . and serves to injure the constitutions of future generations."[15] This organisation was considered a part of the New England Working Men's Association movement, and, except for politics, had about the same history. Like the protective union branch of the association, the Lowell Female Reform Association took up mutual insurance in January, 1847, and at this time the

12 *Voice of Industry*, Oct. 2, 1846; *Doc. Hist.*, VIII, 125.

13 *Voice of Industry*, Jan. 22, 1847; *Doc. Hist.*, VIII, 126.

14 Miss Bagley had been in the Lowell mills for eight years and for four years had been teaching evening school. She was a believer in the Brook Farm idea of association. She attended the meetings of the New England Working Men's Association as a delegate. Persons, in *Labor Laws and their Enforcement*, 36.

15 *Voice of Industry*, Feb. 13, 1846.

name of the organisation was changed to Lowell Female Reform and Mutual Aid Society.[16] It probably disappeared in 1847. Other New England cities, including Manchester, Dover, and Fall River had similar female labour reform associations during the years from 1845 to 1847.[17]

At the Lynn convention of the New England Working Men's Association in January, 1846, a resolution was offered "in behalf of the Lowell factory girls," looking towards a new method of bringing about the ten-hour day: namely, by mutual agreement between the employers and the employed. The convention recommended a meeting for accomplishing this object, to be held in April, at Boston, and to issue a circular to the manufacturers and operatives of the United States for that purpose. No action was taken on these resolutions.

In response to petitions which flooded the General Court of Massachusetts in 1842–1845, a special committee, in the early part of 1845, began an investigation of hours in factories.[18] The hours were found to range from 11 hours and 24 minutes in January and December to 13 hours and 31 minutes in March. While asserting the right and duty of the legislature to regulate the hours of labour in all establishments in the State "if it should ever appear that the public morals, the physical condition, or the social well-being of society were endangered," the legislative committee declared that "the remedy is not with us. We look for it in the progressive improvement in art and science, in a higher appreciation of man's destiny, in a less love for money, and a more ardent love for social happiness and intellectual superiority. Your committee, therefore, while they agree with the petitioners in their desire to lessen the burthens imposed upon labor, differ only as to the means by which these burthens are sought to be removed." The more specific and less platitudinous arguments used against legislation on the subject were, first, that industry would be driven to other States where longer hours were permitted; second, that a reduction of hours must result in a reduction of wages; and finally, that since "labor is on an equality with capital, and indeed controls it, it is intelligent enough to

16 *Ibid.*, Jan. 8, 1847.

17 *Voice of Industry*, June 12 and Dec. 5, 1845, Apr. 9, 1847.

18 Massachusetts, House Document, 1845, No. 50; *Doc. Hist.*, VIII, 133 *et seq.*

make its own bargains, and look out for its own interests without any interference from us."

Accusations of corporation influence and further petitions followed, and a second report, without further testimony, was made in the same year.[19] This also voiced a belief in the inexpediency of legislation on the subject of hours. In 1849 a new committee was appointed to "inquire and report . . . whether any, and what legislation ought to be adopted for the limitation of the hours of work of the laboring people."[20] The majority report of the committee again deemed legislation "inexpedient." A minority report, based upon humanitarian grounds, was presented and an eleven-hour bill was introduced. This bill passed the house but was defeated in the senate. One noteworthy feature of this investigation was the testimony of Josiah Curtis, M. D., upon which the minority of the committee based its report.[21]

New Hampshire was the first State to pass a ten-hour law. Apparently, no petitions on the subject were presented to the legislature before 1845. In that year several were presented but the legislature took no action.[22] The same was true of the petitions presented in 1846.[23] In 1847 the petitions became more numerous and more insistent and a committee was appointed to investigate the matter. The committee expressed a belief that "a proper reduction in the hours of labor would be found advantageous to all parties. Employers would realize a greater profit, even in less time, from labourers more vigorous and better able to work, from having had suitable time to rest; while the operatives would be allowed that time for intellectual and moral culture, which duty to themselves and others most imperatively demands."[24]

In spite of this recognition of conditions which needed a remedy, the majority report of the committee refused to recommend legislation and pointed to the voluntary action of several leading employers in shortening hours as the solution for all employers. The minority report, while expressing a desire to leave contracts "as free as possible," nevertheless recom-

19 *Ibid.*, No. 81.
20 *Ibid.*, 1850, No. 138.
21 Curtis, "Report," in American Medical Association, *Transactions*, 1849, II, 519.
22 New Hampshire, *House Journal*, 1847, pp. 473–479.
23 *Ibid.*, 1846, p. 409.
24 *Ibid.*, 1847, pp. 473–479.

mended legislation to counteract the "inequality in the contracts for labor." "The one party is a rich and powerful corporation, which contracts by agents of no mean ability, but governed by no consideration of individual conscience or responsibility. The other party is a single individual, often poor, a minor, or a female." [25]

On the strength of this minority report, the first ten-hour law in the United States was passed a few days later. While fixing ten hours as a legal day's work, the law permitted longer days by specific contracts.[26] Even children under fifteen were permitted to work longer than ten hours by written consent of the parent or guardian. Jubilation meetings were held in the factory districts of the State and the working people were mutually pledged not to contract for more than the legal day after September 15, 1847.[27] On the other hand, the employers brought pressure to bear upon the workers, forcing their signature to contracts for a longer day than ten hours.[28] As a result the law was ineffective and the working day continued to remain about twelve and one-half hours in length.[29]

After the agitation in other States was well under way, a resolution to determine by law the hours of labour was introduced in the legislature of New York in 1847, but no action was taken.[30] A second effort with similar results was made in 1848.[31] In 1849 many petitions were sent to the legislature and a bill was framed providing that children under twelve should not be employed more than eight hours a day without their own consent. This passed the Assembly but was lost in the Senate.[32] In 1852 a bill to regulate the hours and compensation of labour was again introduced, but was lost in the committee.[33] The next year a ten-hour bill passed the house [34] but was lost in the Senate.[35] During this session, however, a slight concession was made by passing a ten-hour law for public work, in the absence of contracts.[36] This was the first state law

25 *Ibid.*

26 New Hampshire, *Laws of 1847*, chap. 488.

27 *Voice of Industry*, Aug. 27, 1847; *Doc. Hist.*, VIII, 192.

28 New York *Weekly Tribune*, Sept. 15, 1847. Even the "black list" was resorted to by employers. *Voice of Industry*, Sept. 17, 1847.

29 New Hampshire Bureau of Labor, *Report*, 1894, p. 459.

30 New York *Assembly Journal*, 1847, p. 30.

31 *Ibid.*, 1848, p. 1072.

32 *Ibid.*, 1850, pp. 214, 708.

33 *Ibid.*, 1852, pp. 313, 926.

34 *Ibid.*, 1853, p. 941.

35 New York, *Senate Journal*, 1853, 898.

36 New York, *Laws*, 1853, chap. 641.

of this kind, and of course produced much dissatisfaction because of the special contract clause. No further legislation on the question of shorter hours was had in New York until 1859.

As early as 1837 the legislature of Pennsylvania received memorials on the subject of ten-hour legislation.[37] In 1844 the subject was again brought to the attention of the legislature,[38] and again in 1846.[39] In March, 1848, a law was passed providing that no person should be required to work in "cotton, woolen, silk, paper, bagging and flax factories" for more than ten hours a day or sixty hours a week.[40] The employers in Pittsburgh acted in concert on this law and locked out 2,000 operatives who insisted on working only ten hours per day.[41] A settlement was made several weeks later on the ten-hour basis with a 16 per cent reduction in wages. The agitation caused by this law reacted on the political campaign of 1848, and both Whigs and Democrats in Pennsylvania pledged their support to the ten-hour measure.[42] In 1855 the scope of the law was extended to include also all labour performed by minors employed in such establishments.[43]

Soon after the enactment of the Pennsylvania law of 1848, the legislature of Maine made ten hours the legal day for all labour, except agriculture, unless other hours were expressly provided for in the contract. The employment of children under sixteen for more than ten hours per day was prohibited.[44] In 1855, Connecticut, with the special contract clause, passed a ten-hour law for mechanical and factory labour.

In 1852, Ohio enacted a law providing that children under fourteen should not be permitted, and that women and minors under eighteen should not be compelled, to work for more than ten hours per day. The act also fixed the legal day for all mechanics and labourers at ten hours, unless by special contract.[45]

In 1851 Rhode Island appointed W. B. Sayles as commis-

37 Pennsylvania, *Senate Journal*, 1837, p. 326.

38 *Phalanx*, May 18, 1844.

39 Pennsylvania, *House Journal*, 1846, p. 126.

40 Pennsylvania, *Laws of 1848*, No. 227; *Doc. Hist.*, VIII, 200.

41 Pittsburgh *Daily Commercial Journal*, July 21 and Aug. 3, 1848; *Doc. Hist.*, VIII, 201–205.

42 Pittsburgh *Daily Morning Post*, Aug. 25, 1848; *Doc. Hist.*, VIII, 206.

43 Pennsylvania, *Laws of 1855*, No. 501.

44 Maine, *Laws of 1848*; act approved April 21.

45 Ohio, *Laws of 1852*, L. 187.

sioner to investigate child labour. He recommended an eleven-hour day for children from twelve to fifteen years of age.[46] After much opposition in the house, a bill was passed prohibiting the employment of children from twelve to fifteen years of age for more than eleven hours per day, and making ten hours the legal day for all factory operatives and all mechanics except by special contract.[47]

California followed a few months later with a law making ten hours a legal day "in any action in law."[48] Georgia, the only Southern State to give any attention to shortening the working day by legislation, in 1853 passed a law providing that for all white persons under twenty-one years of age, in all cotton, woolen and other manufacturing establishments or machine shops the legal day should be "from sunrise to sunset, the usual and customary time for meals being allowed."[49]

The character of factory labour in Massachusetts changed very materially in the early fifties.[50] During the time when the humanitarian agitation for shorter hours was at its height, the factory towns continually drew women and girls from the agricultural districts to supply the demand for labourers. During the depression following 1847, thousands of these returned to their homes never to come back to the mills. When business revived in 1851–1852 their places had been filled with Irish immigrants. The large number of those seeking work created an agitation for remedial legislation during the period of revival of business. It was now no longer possible for the legislature to refuse legislation on the ground of interfering with the contract rights of free, intelligent American labourers.

With the ascendency of trade unionism in the early fifties and the disappearance of humanitarian leadership, the whole philosophy of the movement for shorter hours changed. Instead of a demand for a "standard" day for all workers, very definite opposition to a "standard" appeared, and in its place a demand for progressive abridgment of hours was formulated. Instead of accepting the conclusion of the humanitarians that

46 *Report* of Commissioner appointed to ascertain the number, ages, hours of labour, and opportunities for education of children employed in the manufacturing establishments of Rhode Island.

47 Rhode Island, *Laws of 1853*, p. 245.

48 *California, Laws of 1853*, Chapter 131, p. 187.

49 Georgia, *Code of 1861*, Sec. 1847.

50 Persons, in *Labor Laws and their Enforcement*, 55 *et seq.*

a reduction of hours may mean a reduction of wages, the leaders of the new movement declared that an increase in wages would accompany a reduction of hours. In methods also the new leaders broke with the old, relying chiefly upon the strike and the trade agreement. Finally, the purpose of the new movement was not so much to protect the life and health of the workers, or to provide leisure time for mental and moral cultivation, as to "make work." This was the trade union argument which dominated the movement for shorter hours in the fifties. Because of the strength of trade unionism in that decade, the movement for shorter hours by legislation disappeared,[51] except in Massachusetts, where factory conditions prevented the growth of unionism.

In October, 1851, thirty-two delegates met in Boston at the call of the New England Industrial League to discuss ways and means of organisation. A Ten-Hour State Convention was decided upon, which met in Boston, January 28, 1852. Following its recommendations, the legislature of 1852 appointed a committee to report on ten-hour legislation. The majority report was unfavourable.[52] Two minority reports were prepared, one of which was instrumental in calling a second ten-hour convention. This assembled on September 30, 1852, and was attended by 196 delegates representing sixteen cities and towns.

The call to this convention expressly declared against a "Ten-Hour Law" which would merely standardise the working day.[53] "We seek the abridgment of the hours of labor — not a new method of measuring the present hours." The call further declared against legislation affecting hours in "agricultural, mechanical, or any other occupation, carried on by individual enterprise. . . . But we do declare, explicitly and frankly, that our purpose, and our whole purpose, is, the enactment of a law which shall prohibit, in stringent and unmistakeable terms, and under adequate penalties, the corporations,[54] chartered by the laws of the State, from employing any person in laboring more than ten hours in any one day. This

51 Except as it took the form of limiting the hours on public work. This measure was also based upon the "make work" argument and took legislative form because of the impossibility of dealing with public officials by trade union methods.

52 Massachusetts, House Document, 1852, No. 185.

53 *Doc. Hist.*, VIII, 127–132.

54 Meaning manufacturing corporations.

is just the law — and all the law — we want on this subject."

The "make work" argument upon which the demand for such a law was based is clearly outlined under the caption "Diminution of Hours Increases Wages." "Wages," the call says, "are governed by the great law of trade — the law of supply and demand. . . . There is a certain amount of the productions of labor demanded by the wants of the community, and there are a certain number of laborers ready for employment to supply the demand. As the demand for the supply of laborers is in excess, wages will rise or fall." Assuming demand for products and supply of labourers to remain constant, a reduction of hours is discussed with respect to diminished, constant, or increased production. The conclusion is reached that a reduction of hours "would be equivalent to diminishing the supply of labor. More laborers would be wanted, therefore," and wages would rise owing to the competition of employers for operatives. This wage-fund argument was supplemented by another, to the effect that an increase of wages would increase consumption of the products of labour, and this increase in consumption would "tend to enhance wages still more."

The history of the ten-hour movement in Massachusetts during succeeding years is a story of the organisation of public opinion. During this time numerous reports were made by legislative committees.[55] Up to 1855, each majority report of committees declared legislation "inexpedient." In that year the house committee reported unanimously in favour of the legislation asked, and in 1856, the majority report of the senate committee did likewise. But no legislation was had until another decade had passed and new arguments were brought forward in its favour. The progress of the movement in the fifties was only in terms of public sentiment.

55 Massachusetts, *House Document*, 1853, No. 122; 1855, No. 180; *Senate Document*, 1856, No. 107.

CHAPTER V

THE INDUSTRIAL CONGRESSES

National Organisations. Need for organisation, 546. Industrial congresses organised, 547. Owen's World Convention, 549. Land reformers gain control of congresses, 550. Industrial congresses cease to exist, 551.
State and City Industrial Congresses. State industrial legislatures, 552. City industrial councils, 552. Conflicting ideas concerning purposes, 554. Fight for control, 555. Reformers dominate, 555. Subjects discussed, 555. Trade unionists in minority, 557. Control by land reformers, 557. Political action abandoned, 558. Bargain for votes, 559. Tammany gains control, 560. Basis of membership changed, 561.
The Homestead Movement. Land policy of government, 562. Manufacturers opposed to free land, 562. Slave holders opposed to land limitation, 563. Western ideas prevail, 563.

NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The National Reform Association was national only in name. It was the need of such an organisation that led Evans and his associates to attend the first meeting of the New England Working Men's Association. Failing in this object they set about to form such a national organisation. This led to the Industrial Congresses of 1845 to 1856, which were the counterpart, quite characteristic of this period, of the National Labor Union, the Knights of Labor, and the American Federation of Labor of later decades.

In March, 1845, the National Reform Association sent out an invitation[1] to "their brethren, the Reformers and Movement men throughout the United States," to assemble in New York in May. The call was signed by Bovay, secretary, and was written in the florid and pessimistic style befitting this speculative and revolutionary period. At about the same time the New England Working Men's Association joined in the call.[2] The convention met in May. Evans, Masquerier, and Bovay led the agrarians, while Ryckman, Godwin, Brisbane, and Channing represented the associationists. Robert Owen

1 New York *Working Man's Advocate*, Mar. 8, 1845.
2 *Awl*, Apr. 5, 1845.

was also present, as well as his disclple, Collins of Skaneateles, and an anti-renter from Delaware County. The convention continued three days,[3] and appointed a committee to determine upon a time and place for an industrial congress. Soon after the adjournment, the New England Working Men's Association again sanctioned the appeal for a congress which would enact a "Reformative Constitution of the United States."

The first session of the industrial congress was called to meet in New York, October, 1845. The committee set forth in the call that, in addition to association and land reform, there were other worthy causes, such as abolition, temperance, peace and moral reform, which could attain success only by a combination of forces. They, therefore, recommended a "convention representing all the different reforms of the day," and invited "farmers, mechanics and other useful classes" to be present.[4]

Quite diverse were the speculations of those who joined to make this a congress of reformers. The agrarians had very definite plans for using the congress to gain the acceptance of their own reforms by the advocates of other reforms. Brisbane believed it would "reconcile all differences and harmonise all discordant views."[5] Ryckman saw in it a truly revolutionary congress able to do for industry what the continental congress had done for the colonies. Greeley pictured to himself a congress of employers and wage-earners, equal in numbers, which would determine, by voluntary agreement, uniform conditions of labour for the entire union, so that a ten-hour day "might be adopted without injury to any and with signal benefit to all."[6] Since the Federal Government did not have jurisdiction over domestic industry, an industrial congress was needed, from his point of view, to regulate destructive home competition, just as the Federal Congress was needed to regulate foreign competition, by means of a protective tariff. And it was Greeley's faith that employers would be willing to hand over to labour the benefits of the tariff, if only a working plan could be devised, that led him to look hopefully to this congress for such a plan. But the employers did not attend the meet-

[3] The associationists held a separate meeting the day following. It was decided to postpone action to the industrial congress.

[4] New York *Tribune*, Oct. 15, 1845; *Doc. Hist.*, VIII, 23–25.

[5] New York *Herald*, May 8, 1845.

[6] New York *Tribune*, Sept. 30, 1845.

ings, and therefore Greeley lamented that it was not a "true Industrial Congress," representing all interests, but "a mere convention" representing or sympathizing with "exclusively the Employed class, or those who labor for others." Nevertheless, he found solace in the fact that "the work to be done is so important and so imminent that we prefer to see it commenced by any rather than neglected by all." [7]

Robert Owen, who happened to be visiting America after an absence of ten years, not to be outdone by his rivals who had repudiated his system,[8] called a "World's Convention" to meet in New York on October 1, two weeks before the time set for the first industrial congress. Owen's call outdid the other in declaring that "to secure permanent progressive prosperity and happiness for all will, now, by one bold and Godlike effort be speedily effected." [9] Three hundred persons gathered at the appointed time to witness this miracle. Owen's expressed desire that "every man and woman should have a right to get up and advance any proposition for the benefit of the human race" brought forth numerous "plans." Owen, himself, outlined his plan of a joint-stock company to manage co-operative industry throughout the country. Ryckman offered a plan dealing with money, land, government loans, homestead exemption, vindictive punishments, and suffrage. Clinton Roosevelt presented "Roosevelt's science of government founded on natural law." Robertson's plan asserted the supremacy of "God, woman and the Bible as the only sources of happiness." Bovay's plan included free land, direct taxes, free migration, free education, equal rights to the sexes, and a "new moral government to be lodged in a Congress of Nations." Finch added to Bovay's plan one universal language and national employment for the unemployed. Evans had twenty planks, beginning with the "Rights of Nature" and ending with land limitation. Other plans were offered, all were adopted, and after eight days of confusion the convention closed and Owenism disappeared.

The preliminary meeting of the industrial congress was held

[7] *Ibid.*, Oct. 21, 1845.

[8] The associationists had refused admittance to his followers because of their religious views, while Owen and Evans had had a lively tilt in the May convention of reformers.

[9] New York *Tribune*, Sept. 27, 1845.

as announced on October 14, 1845. Abolition, ten-hour movement, association, and land reform were prominently represented. The advocates of the last controlled the meeting, elected the president and secretaries [10] and framed the resolutions. The associationists took only a minor place in the congress and offered no characteristic plans or resolutions.[11]

The second meeting of the congress was held in Boston, June 8, 1846. The qualifications for membership were elaborated by including a pledge to support "a reasonable limitation of the quantity of land that any individual may acquire possession of hereafter; the exemption of the Homestead from mortgage or debt hereafter; the freedom of the public lands to actual settlers; a limitation of the hours of daily labor for wages in all public works, and in all establishments authorizsd by law, to ten." [12]

The meeting in 1847, held in New York, adopted resolutions against tariffs "on everyday and necessary articles of consumption," against the Mexican War, against special privileges for corporations, including limited liability, against private ownership of public utilities, and in favour of direct taxation, co-operative stores, and "practical and useful education" for children of the wage-earners.[13] The attention of temperance, moral, and other reformers was called to the work of the congress as striking "at the root of the evils" which they deplored.

By this time almost all of the associationists and all other delegates except land reformers had withdrawn from the congress. The call to the meeting of 1848, to be held in Philadelphia, stated that the main issues to be discussed were land limitation and freedom of the public lands to actual settlers.[14] Other questions which came up were reduction of salaries of public officials, tariff reduction, abolition of the standing army, direct taxation, hours of labour on public work, government loans, and land grants to railroads.[15]

The congress of 1849 met in Cincinnati.[16] At this meeting

10 William E. Wait, of Illinois, was elected president, and Evans, one of three secretaries.

11 New York *Weekly Tribune*, Oct. 25, 1845.

12 *Voice of Industry*, June 19, 1846.

13 *Ibid.*, June 18 and 25, 1847.

14 *Young America*, Apr. 29, 1848.

15 New York *Weekly Tribune*, July 1, 1848.

16 The minutes of this meeting are lacking.

a still more elaborate declaration of principles was requested and a committee, to which this request was referred, reported to the Chicago Congress of 1850 a list of "fundamental principles," "auxiliary principles," and "means," in harmony with homestead exemption, land freedom and land limitation.[17]

At the congress in Albany, New York, in June, 1851,[18] Isaac P. Walker, United States senator from Wisconsin, was nominated for the presidency of the United States, and an elaborate address to the people of the United States was prepared.

In 1852 the land reformers were again in full control of the congress which met in Washington,[19] but the interest hitherto taken in the organisation was waning. The chief reasons for this were the presidential election, the slavery question, and the growth of trade unions.

After 1852 more or less perfunctory meetings were held annually as follows: 1853, Wilmington, Delaware;[20] 1854, Trenton, New Jersey;[21] 1855, Cleveland, Ohio;[22] and 1856, New York.[23] Each of these did little more than ratify the proceedings of former congresses. The twenty-five delegates in attendance at the Wilmington meeting in 1853 had by 1856 dwindled to eleven.

STATE AND CITY INDUSTRIAL CONGRESSES

The national industrial congresses can scarcely be said to have enlisted the support of wage-earners. Various labour organisations were represented, but they were mainly the co-operative or communistic societies previously described. In fact, the period of depression had not yet permitted the organisation of trade unions. The situation was different with the city industrial congresses, whose history shows the rapid change which came over the labour movement, from the panaceas of co-operation and land reform in 1849 to modern trade unionism in 1853.

Intermediate between the national and the city congresses

17 New York *Semi-weekly Tribune*, June 19, 1850.
18 New York *Tribune*, June 11, 1851.
19 *Proceedings of the Industrial Congress.*
20 New York *Tribune*, June 2, 1853.
21 Industrial Congress, *Proceedings.*
22 New York *Tribune*, June 8, 1855.
23 New York *Times*, June 7, 1856; New York *Tribune*, June 7, 1856.

was the state "industrial congress" or "industrial legislature." These were organised subsequent to the city congresses, but their history is practically the same as that of the national congress. The first one met at Trenton, New Jersey, in 1851.[24] The second met at Albany, New York, in the same year. Others were organised as far west as Illinois. For the most part, they were controlled by the agrarians, until they merged into the political movements of the time.

The city industrial congresses (or more properly, city industrial councils) preceded in time the state industrial legislatures. The printers' strike in Boston in the middle of 1849 drew other trades together for the purpose of sympathising with and giving aid to this body of workmen. When the iron manufacturers of Pittsburgh cut the wages of the puddlers and boilers in December, 1849, a workingmen's congress was called by the representatives of fourteen trades "for the maintenance of their own interests." [25]

New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Albany, Auburn, (New York), Buffalo, Trenton, Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and other cities soon followed. In fact scarcely an industrial centre was without some sort of an industrial congress in the year 1850. Some of these retained their organisations but a few weeks; others continued their existence for several months; while that in New York City lived for two and a half years. Its meetings were reported regularly in the New York *Tribune*. Except for its longer life, it is a good example of the city congresses, each of the others having about the same composition and accomplishing about the same results.

When it was announced in the various trade societies of New York City, about the middle of May, 1850, that a workingmen's congress was to be organised soon, the operative masons favoured it because it would "make useful suggestions to the

24 New York *Tribune*, Feb. 8, 1851.

25 This convention came about in this manner: The iron masters of the United States had held a convention in Pittsburgh in November, 1849, for the purpose of taking measures to get an adjustment of the tariff to their own interest. (Pittsburgh *Post*, Nov. 23, 1849.) After concluding that this was improbable at this time, and needing a month in which to make repairs in their shops, the employers in Pittsburgh and vicinity thought to bring pressure to bear upon the voters by cutting wages and claiming that they must do so on account of non-protection. (*Ibid.*, Dec. 19, 1849.) The result was a strike which lasted longer than the masters had anticipated. In February, 1850, they began to import immigrants. (Pittsburgh *Chronicle*, Feb. 19, 1850.) Soon after this the convention was called, which resulted in the formation of the workingmen's congress.

different Benevolent and Protective Associations." [26] The Friendly Society of Iron Molders were willing to join because "no measure will be adopted by this Congress which will contravene in the least from the rules and regulations of the societies represented." [27] The upholsterers' society thought such a "Central Workingmen's Congress" gave promise of "strengthening and increasing our Industrial organisation, whether benevolent or protective." [28] The coach painters of New York and vicinity believed it would "suggest such reforms as our necessities demand." [29] These quotations indicate the hazy notions held concerning the project.

The first meeting was held on June 6, 1850. The following organisations represented at this meeting indicate the wide extent of labour organisation in New York at this time: Cordwainers' Protective Society (Men's Branch); Practical Painters' Benevolent Society; United Association of Coach Painters; Bricklayers' and Plasterers' Protective Association; Window Shade Painters' Protective Union; Boot and Shoe Makers' Working Union; Sash and Blindmakers' Protective Union; Porters' Protective Union; House Carpenters' Benevolent Association; House Carpenters' Protective Association; Plumbers' Benevolent Association; Cabinet Makers' Union; Tobacco Pipe Makers; United Workingmen's League; Iron Moulders' Union; Upholsterers' Union; Operative Bakers' Union; Brotherhood of the Union, Ouvrier Circle, No. 3, and Nazarene Circle of the Eleventh Ward; Bookbinders', Pocketbook and Paper-box Makers' Union; Coopers' Protective Union, No. 1; Central Commission of the United States; Mechanics' Mutual Protection, No. 11, No. 19 and No. 41; Journeymen Hat Finishers' Union; Gold and Silver Artisans and Manufacturing Jewelers; Journeymen Silversmiths' Protective and Benevolent Association; Steam Boiler Makers' Protective Society; Cigar Makers' Union; Stove Makers' Union; Eleventh Ward National Reform Association; Church of Humanity; Central National Reform Association; Sailors' Union; Social Reform Society; Economical Exchange Association; Benevolent Society of Social Reformers; Chromopress Printers'

[26] New York *Tribune*, May 23, 1850.
[27] *Ibid.*, May 27, 1850.
[28] *Ibid.*, May 27, 1850.
[29] *Ibid.*, May 23, 1850.

Union; Benevolent Dyers' Association; Printers' Union; Brush Makers' Union; Seventeenth Ward Land Reform Association; Tin and Sheet Iron Workers' Association; Smiths' and Wheelwrights' Union; Marble Polishers' Union; Labourers' United Benevolent Society; Operative Bakers' Industrial Association; Ship Sawyers' Union.[30]

Of the 110 delegates present, the followers of Greeley and Brisbane were perhaps strongest, though they did not have a majority. The others included land reformers, trade union men, politicians, and what not.[31] Little was accomplished at the first few meetings.[32] At the fourth session, a preamble was reported by the committee on constitution and was recommended for adoption, declaring against the control which capital, or "past labor," had secured over government, the public domain, monopolies, banking institutions, contract convict labour, and the newspaper press. After a stormy session a preamble was adopted, reading:

"The delegates appointed by the several organizations of Mechanics and Laborers of the City of New York, for the purpose of forming a Central Industrial Council, being deeply sensible of the privations and sufferings imposed on the Laboring classes by the hostility of the relations which now exist between Capital and Labor, and of the constant tendency of these relations to increase the evils complained of, do hereby form ourselves into a permanent organization for the purpose of devising means to reconcile the interests of Labor and Capital — to secure to the Laborer the full product of his toil — to promote *union*, harmony and brotherly feeling among all the workmen, of whatever occupation — and to use all available means to promote their moral, intellectual and social elevation."

The clause in the constitution which received most discussion at several successive meetings before it was finally adopted

30 New York *Tribune*, June 7, 1850.

31 James Gordon Bennett of the New York *Herald* said in an editorial: "The great error in this movement is, that it did not begin right; it did not originate with the trades, but with a knot of political tricksters, and hence the peculiar composition of the body. What are its constituent parts? . . . Horace Greeley, his two reporters, Johnasson and Ottarson, and his printer's devil, Henderson, represent a party paper, the New York *Tribune*, the organ of free soil whiggery and socialism. Then there is, on the other hand, Mr. Daniel B. Taylor, a well known politician, once a member of the Assembly, and mixed up with every election for years. Ostensibly he represents the hodmen, but really the democrats. . . . Mr. Bailey, the chairman; Mr. Crate, the secretary. The former represents — what? (Don't laugh, readers!) He represents the Church of Humanity. The latter represents some other body of men, but they are not a body of tradesmen." New York *Herald*, July 16, 1850.

32 At the first meeting, Horace Greeley, K. A. Bailey (also an advocate of co-oper-

related to eligibility of members. It provided: "That all associations of INDUSTRIALS, MECHANICS AND LABORERS, whether benevolent or protective (chartered or not) shall be entitled to three Delegates, who must be members of the organization they represent."

The objections to this article came from the trade unionists, who feared that its adoption would admit others than workingmen. "Delegates might be sent from the Free Masons, Odd Fellows, Sons of Temperance, and other exclusively secret orders of this class, who might be opposed to the cause of labour, and come into the Congress for the purpose of sowing the seeds of discord." [33] This criticism was answered with the statement that the societies there represented were not in favour "of establishing a General Trades' Union," and were opposed to spending their money in support of other trades on strike. The final vote on the article favoured its adoption two to one.

From the beginning this congress was dominated by reformers. The struggle for control developed early. The supporters of productive co-operation did not retain their supremacy long. Only twice in its life of two and a half years did the congress openly declare in favour of productive co-operation. When the German tailors failed to get the advance in wages asked for in July, 1850, Weitling asked the congress to aid them in establishing a co-operative shop. A favourable reply but no financial aid was given. The second occasion [34] was the announcement of the degradation of the women who were thrown out of work or whose wages were being reduced by the sewing machine. A resolution was introduced "that the State Legislature be memorialised to grant a subsidy to the Shirt Makers of New York, to assist them in forming a Trade Association, and that said subsidy will not be less liberal to this helpless body of female workers than was the grant made to the file makers' association of Paris." The members of the congress sympathised with the women, but were more willing to aid them by private subscription than by state subsidies, since

ation), G. C. Deane (land reformer), and William Wainwright (trade unionist) were nominated for president. Bailey was elected. Greeley was a delegate from the typographical society, but he never attended a meeting of the Congress. He finally resigned "on account of pressure of other business." New York *Tribune*, Sept. 25, 1850.

33 New York *Tribune*, July 3, 1850.

34 *Ibid.*, Apr. 9, 1851.

they looked upon the latter as pauperising. After discussing the matter for three successive sessions, the petition was tabled.

Distributive co-operation fared a little better. The congress at various times urged the labourers to patronise the New York Protective Union, the Economical Exchange Association, and other attempts at co-operative storekeeping already formed. When Pond presented his plan for the co-operative labour league,[35] it was received favourably and a "Board of Managers of the Co-operative Labor League of the City of New York" was created. After the league was started resolutions were passed in the congress from time to time, though in a rather perfunctory manner, recommending it to the workingmen in the city.

Other theories of social reorganisation were discussed in the congress.[36] Edward Kellogg's *Labor and Other Capital* was placed before the congress for review. The committee appointed for that purpose gave as their opinion that this work, which was to have so remarkable an influence fifteen years afterwards under the name of "Greenbackism,"[37] "ably exposes the evils that attend our present bank, usury and commercial laws and customs." But they were not willing to recommend Kellogg's constructive ideas.[38]

Stephen Pearl Andrews, the anarchist follower of Josiah Warren,[39] was not known to the congress during the first few months of its sessions.[40] When he finally secured a seat in this body, his doctrines were indifferently received. Each time he set forth his "Declaration of Fundamental Truths," the meeting was adjourned or discussion was postponed in order to give place to the "regular order." Finally, his persistence won the appointment of a committee to investigate his "platform," but the committee never reported to the congress.

The trade unions as such had no city centrals at this time.

35 See above, I, 509 and note.

36 Legislation looking to the removal of minor evils was discussed and resolutions concerning the same were from time to time passed; e.g., lien laws, abolition of laws permitting collection of debts by court procedure, and eight and ten-hour laws.

37 New York *Tribune*, Mar. 22, 1851. See chapter on National Labor Union, II, 119 *et seq.*

38 Kellogg held a seat in the congress, being a delegate from the New York Currency Reform Association. Later the committee reported its own views of the evils of the existing banking system and held that land reform would solve this problem also.

39 See above, I, 517 *et seq.*

40 He was elected Jan. 7, 1851, as a delegate from the Fifth Ward Reformers.

The city industrial councils contained representatives of the trades organisations, but they were never in control of these bodies. As stated before, the fight against admitting others than labourers to the congress was led by trade unionists, but their attempt to make the congress a city central body failed. When the nature of the congress became evident to the unionists, they began to register their objections to the subjects treated. About the time when the congress was organised, the bricklayers, plasterers, stone-masons, and labourers were planning a central organisation for the city,[41] but the more inclusive movement for the formation of the congress engulfed the scheme and it was abandoned. Later in the year the representative to the congress from the operative masons asked the members of the congress to take the initiative in forming a trades' convention, but the proposal received no official recognition.[42] At various times the congress passed resolutions seemingly favourable to trade unionism; but in each case the resolutions were presented and supported by union men and nothing came of the popular vote. Such was the one calling on the congress not to patronise the employing tailors who refused the prices demanded by the striking journeymen.[43] Another was the request from the stonecutters that the congress use its influence to prevent the teaching of their trade to convicts.[44]

Many of the trade unions refused to send delegates to the congress at any time, while others which had given their support at first began to withdraw their representatives.

The control by land reformers over the congress was maintained for nearly two years. Of the 110 charter members of the organisation, not more than 20 per cent were delegates from societies which openly advocated land reform; while of the 268 who were later admitted, 109 or nearly 41 per cent, represented such organisations. Enough others, supposedly representing trade unions and numerous other associations gave their support to this branch of reform to insure its advocates a safe majority.[45]

41 New York *Tribune*, June 27, 1850.
42 *Ibid.*, Aug. 28, 1850.
43 *Ibid.*, Dec. 20, 1850.
44 *Ibid.*
45 In fact, this element became so strong that a resolution was considered to change the name of the organisation to "New York Industrial Council." Thus it might correspond to the city government (the New York Common Council) whose action it was designed to influence, as the Industrial Legislatures and Industrial Con-

The power of this faction soon became manifest. Petitions were sent to Congress stating that if the public lands were thrown open, the competition in the labour markets of the city would cease.[46] Other petitions were designed to affect city rents directly. The congress tried to bring about the creation of "Inspectors of Rents" in each ward, to be elected annually by the people, who should have the power to stop the payment of rent in case a tenement should become unfit for occupation through neglect by the owner.[47] Building inspectors who should see that new buildings were properly constructed were asked for. They proposed to limit rentals to 10 per cent and to limit the ownership of lots.

According to the statements of the leaders, the *raison d'être* of the industrial congresses was so to influence the legislation of the United States — city, state, and national — as to secure the establishment of the reforms they demanded. The possible means of accomplishing this end were three: (1) To form a new party, incorporate into its platform only their own principles, and stake all their hopes of its success in winning against the older political parties; (2) To act as a sort of adviser to the party in power, taking no active part in political campaigns, but tendering their advice concerning the needed reforms to whichever faction held the power for the moment: (3) To control the elections of the old political parties by giving their support to those candidates who promised to support their reforms, and by withholding it from their opponents.

The first was tried in only a few instances and was very soon abandoned as entirely impracticable. The second was tried more persistently. The petitions which were sent to the Congress of the United States on "Free Farms for the Workingmen," "Land Limitation," "Bounty Lands," and "Homestead Bills" were so numerous and found so few champions[48]

gresses corresponded to the State and National Governments to which the former were designed to present new and necessary reforms. (*Ibid.*, Apr. 23, 1851.) From this time on, the connection with, and, in a sense, subordination to, the industrial legislature of New York and the national industrial congress was acknowledged.

46 *Ibid.*, Aug. 15, 1850.

47 *Ibid.*, Aug. 8, 1850.

48 The most noteworthy of these few during the later forties and early fifties was Senator Isaac A. Walker, of Wisconsin. Walker based his doctrines on the philosophies of Aristotle, Montesquieu, Blackstone, and Jefferson. However, he was not so ardent as some of the land reformers, but claimed: "I am not a perfectionist — I aim not at perfection. . . . Nor am I an agrarian. . . . I contend only, that man should not be permitted to

that but few of them were ever presented to that body. Memorials on almost every conceivable reform touching in any way the question of land holding and land ownership received but little more attention at the hands of the state legislatures.

Thus the only expedient left was that of bargaining votes for the support of their principles. As early as the mayoralty campaign of October, 1850, the New York City Industrial Congress began to question candidates as to their willingness to support the desired reforms. One candidate especially took advantage of this opportunity to display his magnanimity towards the oppressed classes and his entire sympathy with their desires by answering the queries in an open letter, which, of course, was widely circulated. In this letter he pledged support to every reform mentioned in the questionnaire and closed his letter by promising to have conducted "an inquiry into the propriety of relieving the city of its superfluous labor . . . by appropriations from the public Treasury toward the encouragement of emigration to the Far Western States." [49] But at this time the system of "rewards" and "punishments" had not been developed by the congress. This fact, coupled with the general ignorance of the power of the congress to control votes, created an indifference among most of the candidates to the questions asked, and the majority made no reply. Later the barter system was introduced, and candidates gave more attention to the queries.

In recognising the expediency of giving votes to candidates in return for legislative support, the congress thought to "eschew partyism of every description" [50] and, following the example of Evans, simply to hold the balance of power through reliable men of either or both of the old parties. Thanks to the political tricksters who had succeeded in getting themselves elected as delegates to the congress, such dreams were soon dispelled. The opportunity for which these men had been waiting was now at hand. All thoughts of an independent or land reform party had been given up; the market for votes was now open and promises constituted the only acceptable currency.

speculate or traffic in that which he cannot produce, or the quantity of which he cannot increase." New York *Herald*, Aug. 29, 1850.

[49] New York *Tribune*, Oct. 16, 1850

[50] *Ibid.*, Apr. 17, 1851.

In New York, Tammany was quick to start the bidding, and on May 27, 1851, the president of the congress read a communication, "inviting the Congress to participate in a grand mass meeting at Tammany Hall, Tuesday evening, June 3, of all those in favour of Land and other Industrial reform, to be made elements in the presidential contest of 1852." [51] This invitation called forth a spirited debate, being opposed by those who were not willing to become a party to political intrigue. After much discussion, more or less personal in character, the invitation was accepted.

The Tammany convention marks the beginning of the end. The nondescript organisation which a little more than a year previous had been announced as a workingmen's congress, designed to protect and enforce the rights of the labourers, was now to become a part of the "machine"; and the somewhat visionary ideal of the founders, "principle, not power," was to give place to the party slogan, "power, not principle." Of course, those in the thick of the fight failed to comprehend the significance of this change [52] and many of the delegates to the congress failed to penetrate the plans of Tammany for eighteen months afterward. Few indeed realised that the prophecy of James Gordon Bennett, made at the time of the organisation of the congress, was now to be fulfilled. Bennett wrote in an editorial:

"A motion will be made to limit the membership to the trades, and thus to purge the body of men who have no right to sit in it. If this motion be carried, it will make a clean sweep of the politicians and socialists; and there will be some chance of the sound wisdom of the honest tradesmen having fair play to work out a practical redress of any real grievance under which they may labour. But we fear the sinister influences are too strong in the body, and the schemes too numerous, to allow that proposition to prevail. If it should be defeated, then all hope of accomplishing anything useful through this body is lost, and it will fall into the hands of a few wire-pullers, who will turn it to their own advantage, and sell the

51 *Ibid.*, May 30, 1851. The general call to this meeting stated that its purposes were to "respond to the action of our Democratic Senators and Representatives in the Congress of the United States, on the all-engrossing and important question of the Freedom of the Public Lands; and to combine all true Democrats for the purpose of engrafting the measure as one of the cardinal principles of the Democratic Party." *Ibid.*, June 2, 1851.

52 We speak of this as the change, though the politicians had been planning for this *coup* since the establishment of the congress.

trades to the highest bidder. Then will be acted over again the farces already played in this city, in which the trades have been made the ladder of needy or ambitious politicians, who kicked them away the moment they gained the summit of their aspirations." [53]

The Tammany meeting convened with a politician delegate of the industrial congress in the chair. Two vice-presidents and a secretary were appointed from each of the nineteen wards in the city. Of all officers appointed, only about twenty, or one-third of the whole number, were members of the congress. Such eminent "friends of the workingmen" as Lorenzo B. Shephard, at one time Grand Sachem of Tammany; John Cochrane, who later remarked that he "would vote for the devil incarnate if nominated by Tammany Hall"; William V. Barr, a brother of Alderman Thomas J. Barr, a Tammanyite, and himself a Tammany candidate for alderman in 1852; and Mike Walsh, delighted the audience by their oratory and were loudly applauded when they declared with unction that the freedom of the public lands will give "the labourer opportunity to think for himself — to develop his intellect — to understand his rights and duties as a man and as a citizen"; or when they held the principle that "man is as much entitled to improve the soil as to breathe the air" as incontrovertible. After those present had been sufficiently convinced that if they hoped to have their grievances redressed, the Democratic party was the institution to which the labourers must give their support, the chairman introduced a preamble and resolutions which were received with enthusiastic applause and were adopted without a dissenting voice. These proclaimed man's right to the soil, and urged that freedom of the public lands be endorsed by the Democratic party. Isaac A. Walker, of Wisconsin, was nominated as the candidate of the party for president in 1852.

Up to this time, the delegates in the congress were supposed to represent labour organisations, reform societies, or other definite bodies of workingmen. Now, however, this pretence was abandoned and the ward became the unit of organisation.[54]

53 New York *Herald*, July 16, 1850.

54 Most of the delegates elected after this time came from such vague and indefinite organisations as Young Men's Reform Club, Fifth Ward Reformers, Sixth Ward Industrial Reformers, Sixteenth Ward Land Reform Association, Tenth Ward National Reform Association, Fourteenth Ward Democratic Whig Association. More commonly still, delegates

Throughout the winter of 1851–1852, an active campaign was waged to increase the membership of the congress. Propagandist meetings became common. More and more the labour advocates found difficulty in gaining recognition when they wished to address the delegates. Regular sessions were held up to the time of the November elections, 1852, when the organisation expired.

THE HOMESTEAD MOVEMENT

The outcome of the land reform movement may be briefly indicated. Prior to 1840 the land policy of the Government was mainly fiscal — the public lands were considered to be a source of public revenue. Between 1840 and 1862 a social policy gained ascendency. The homestead law of 1862 granted 160 acres to any citizen, free of charge, on proof of occupation and cultivation.

This social policy was shaped by the conflict of several classes representing divergent policies. From the workingmen of the East sprang the agrarian doctrine of natural rights, which contributed a philosophy to the "free soil" movement from 1844 to 1850. From the poor whites of the upland region of the South came a similar doctrine represented by the Tennessee tailor, Andrew Johnson, and his first homestead bill, introduced in 1845. From the western pioneers and settlers came the demand for increased population and development of resources, leading both to homesteads for settlers and land grants for railways.

Against these interests were the manufacturers, capitalists, and land owners of the East and the settled States. Their objections were voiced in Congress as follows: "By your policy you strike down our great manufacturing interests. . . . You turn thousands of our manufacturers and labourers out of employment, under the encouragement of your laws. You render useless and valueless millions of capital which our people have invested in manufacture of iron. . . . You depreciate value of real estate. You make a bid for our population, by holding out

claimed and were granted admission simply on their statement that they represented some particular ward, without even pretending that they were elected by a definite group of men entitled to be heard in this convention.

inducements for our productive labourers to leave their old homes, under the seductive promise of lands for nothing, and railroads without taxes, thereby decreasing our population and consequently increasing the burdens of those that remain in the old states." [55]

From the southern slave owners came the opposition to a policy that would prevent the expansion of large plantations and slave labour. The latter opposition brought on the crisis. It followed the Kansas-Nebraska act of 1854 opening up these States to slavery. The West and the East finally combined and the policy of the West prevailed, but not until the slave-owning States had seceded.

The agrarian agitation of the workingmen had led the way and then disappeared as such. During its period hundreds of petitions came into Congress. Even land limitation was debated in two state legislatures — Wisconsin and New York.[56] Homestead exemption laws began to be adopted, and have now become universal.

Not the entire reform was accepted. The western spirit dominated. The agrarians emphasised equal distribution; the westerners emphasised production. The agrarians looked toward relief for the wage-earners of the East. The westerners looked for real estate values. The agrarians would stop speculation by land limitation and inalienability. The westerners fostered speculation and favoured huge grants to railways. The homestead laws, as finally adopted, doubtless prevented those great estates which followed the different policy of the Australian colonies, but they did not carry out the broad principles of the original agrarians. It remained for another agrarian, Henry George thirty-five years after George Henry Evans,[57] to renew the doctrine of natural rights, but to propose to take for the workingmen, not an equal share for each in unoccupied resources, but a share in the unearned and speculative values of resources now completely occupied.

55 Speech of J. Allison of Pennsylvania, *Congressional Globe*, vol. xxv. 32d *Cong.*, 1st Sess., Apr. 20, 1852, pp. 432 *et seq.*

56 Wisconsin, *Assembly Journal*, 1848, pp. 72, 109; 1851, p. 37; Wisconsin, *Senate Journal*, 1849, pp. 92, 114; New York, *Assembly Document*, 1848, No. 78; New York, *Assembly Journal*, 1849, p. 637; New York, *Senate Journal*, 1850, p. 99.

57 *Progress and Poverty*, published in 1880. The single tax and labour movements of the decade of the eighties are described below, II. 446 *et seq.*

CHAPTER VI

CO-OPERATIVE UNIONISM

Depression of 1847, 564. Revolutionary press, 564. Co-operation tried, 565. Germans and co-operation, 567. American opposition, 568. Reasons for failure of co-operation, 570. Success in New England, 573. Failure elsewhere, 573. Building Associations, 574.

The rising prices of 1843–1846 broke again in 1847 and prices continued to fall until, by 1849, they had reached the lowest point of the decade. These two years witnessed the high-water mark of the humanitarian agitation and the accompanying depression of trade unionism. By this time the revolutionary state of Europe commanded attention. In almost every European country the working classes were struggling for recognition. Meetings of workingmen were held in many cities of the United States to rejoice with the French and German workmen when a victory was won, or to express sympathy with the Irish when their proposals were defeated. At about the same time, a large mass meeting of all parties and classes was held at St. Louis to express the sympathy of that city with the republican movements in Europe. From Philadelphia came a call for French citizens to hear an address by Citizen F. B. Vionis, of Paris.[1] At the same time, almost every American city had its Chartist club, and even the national industrial congress at its meeting in Philadelphia in 1848 gave a part of its time to a discussion of revolutionary measures.

Since the established press failed to give favourable and complete reports of the European movements, distinctly labour papers were needed. The *Irish American,* the *European American,* the *Workers' Journal,* the *Champion of American Labor,* and other newspapers of like character were established. Still others were planned, but most of them seem never to have been started. Such was the case with the project of Citizen Vionis, mentioned above. After lecturing to his coun-

1 Philadelphia *Ledger,* June 2, 1848.

trymen in the United States, he proposed to begin the publication of a daily paper, to be printed in both English and French, and to be called the *Journal de la République Française, ou le Vrai Organe des Populations Franco–Americaines.*[2]

An important result of these meetings was the opportunity afforded and accepted to discuss the general questions in which all working people were interested. Strikes and even unions were as yet based upon the shop as the unit. These meetings, on the other hand, gave the labourer an opportunity to learn the views of more men of his own class than he could possibly meet in his own shop or trade. They opened the way for his recognition of the class alignments taking place throughout the industrial world and produced a feeling of common interest which had its effect in the labour movements of the next decade.

In a preceding chapter we have seen the philosophical platform on which the humanitarians carried their propaganda of co-operation to the wage-earners. This was not without its influence, and, for a period of four or five years, until the revival of business in 1852, labour organisations experimented with these substitutes for strikes. It was this circumstance that brought the question of association before them more forcibly than anything else.

When the iron moulders of Cincinnati failed to win their strike in the fall of 1847, a few of their number collected what funds they could and organised a sort of joint-stock company which they called "The Journeymen Moulders' Union Foundry." Among the members $2,100 was collected, enough to purchase a piece of land eight miles below Cincinnati. Two philanthropists of the city erected their buildings. Work began in August, 1848. The forty-seven members withdrew from the proceeds of their labour just enough to supply their daily needs and allowed the remainder to accumulate as capital. Thus, by January 15, 1850, they had added $5,692.[3] When a group of puddlers and boilers of Pittsburgh decided to form an association for productive purposes, they tried the plan of selling stock to any one who wished to take an interest in the venture. How-

2 Vionis, like the other agitators, had a definite programme of social reform which he hoped to spread in this manner. He hoped first to reorganise industry, credit, and money in America, and then spread his reforms to Europe.

3 Pittsburgh *Post*, Jan. 15, 1850.

ever, the plan most often tried was that of securing donations or loans from workers in other trades. After an unsuccessful strike, the Boston tailors, in September, 1849, sent representatives to New York and other cities to plead for support. Several meetings of labourers were held in Boston, at which collections were taken for the support of a co-operative store among the tailors. The result of these efforts was the contribution of $512.45.[4]

When the New York tailors had similar difficulties with their employers in the following year, they made appeals to all the trades for aid in establishing themselves as their own employers. In August of that year, William Weitling reported a set of resolutions to the New York Industrial Congress, asking for aid in the organisation of an Association Clothing Establishment. The Congress responded by calling a mass meeting of all labourers, at which fifty-eight separate trades were represented. Speeches were made in English and in German. Some money was collected, but not enough to serve as a working capital. The tailors then tried the expedient of calling for loans.

We find outside aid to productive associations most common among the women operatives. It was not unusual to see appeals like the following in the newspapers of the time:

"To the Humane: A Petition from the Tailoresses of the City and County of Philadelphia.— The winter is upon us, and distress and want stare us in the face. By reason of the low prices for which we are obliged to work, many of us are found at the midnight lamp and until daybreak, at the needle, labouring for a pittance which is scarcely sufficient for the necessities of the summer season. . . . Ladies, we appeal to you to aid us, and to represent our case. Gentlemen, women whom Almighty has placed under your care, now present themselves before you and implore your succor. Raise for us funds, in any way that you think proper, and secure them as you please. Most of the clothing which you wear passes through our hands, but very little does it profit us. Help us to help ourselves. Give us but justice — favour we ask not — and then Rosines, and Magdalens, and children's prisons may want inmates! . . . The funds required to maintain these institutions are far more than enough to start us in our enterprise, and we believe that there is no other way to secure for us a fair compensation for our labor. We do not propose to undersell the tailors, nor to increase the cost of

4 New York *Tribune*, Sept. 12, 1849.

any garment, nor in any way to disturb trade; we only wish to sell our own work, in order that the reward of industry may reach the hands which accomplish the task." [5]

Among the Germans was an attitude towards productive co-operation based more nearly on general principles than on the practical exigencies of a strike. Fresh from the scenes of revolutions in Europe and imbued with communistic ideas, these immigrants, knowing little of labour conditions but oppression and hard work, were more easily influenced than were the American labourers or the English. The Germans, too, compared with the English and the Irish, were more imaginative, more willing to sacrifice a little in the present in order to gain in the future; more given to reflection and the construction of large plans, and more trustful in the honesty and integrity of their fellow-workers.

With the beginning of the publication of the *Republik der Arbeiter* in January, 1850, the labour movement among the Germans became for a time strongly identified with Weitling's schemes.[6] This was particularly true during the first half of the year. The centre of Weitling's followers at this time was the Central Social Reform Association. At the meetings of this organisation, the various plans of Weitling were discussed and soon the separate trades among the Germans began to take action in the direction of testing the proposed schemes.

Among the first of such tests was that of the carpenters of New York. The constitution of this trade association appeared in the *Republik der Arbeiter* for March, 1850. It declared that the objects of the association were to guarantee to each member steady work and to secure to him the full product of his labour. It also asked the carpenters throughout the United States to organise themselves into similar societies, other trades to do likewise, and finally to establish a common bank of exchange for all trades.

Unlike the American labourers, the Germans attempted several associations for productive purposes which included in the project considerable portions of the trade. This was the case with the German cabinet makers. This trade was organised in March, 1850, with 450 members favourable to co-operative

5 *Ibid.*, Feb. 23, 1850.

6 See above, I, 512 *et seq.*

production out of a total enrolment of 800. A small percentage of the members was employed in an association shop, but only for a short time.[7] The Germans had attempted to get the American cabinet makers to co-operate with them. At a meeting of the former in June, 1850, complaints were made against the want of sympathy and energy of the American journeymen cabinet makers and their aversion towards joining the Association.

Several other associations of a similar nature were started among the Germans in 1850, most of which either failed entirely or met with indifferent success for a time and finally disappeared. The Social Reform Association broke up in August, 1850, without fulfilling its promise to make a serious attempt to establish a Weitling bank of exchange. Weitling himself lost the leadership of his countrymen soon after. Of the co-operative establishments started by the Germans in New York, only four existed in September, 1851. There were, besides, seven in other cities: two in Buffalo, one in Detroit, one in Cincinnati, one in Philadelphia, and two in Pittsburgh.[8]

In general it may be said that the American workmen did not favour associations for productive purposes. At the suggestion of reformers or of the few within their own ranks who had become enthusiastic over the idea of "self-employment," they sometimes passed resolutions favouring the project and even declaring for its introduction; but when it came to the actual work of starting the movement they were not willing to accept the responsibility. The New York Industrial Congress declined to adopt a resolution offered for the purpose.[9] At other times there was positive opposition to such an undertaking. A part of the opposition was against the principle itself and a part against its practical operation. Some of the trades refused to consider the proposition even when capital was offered to them for this purpose. When, in 1850, the bakers of New York were attempting to get better conditions in their work, a gentleman offered to lend them sufficient capital to start an association for productive purposes, and another man offered them the use of a

7 New York *Tribune*, Apr. 26, 1850.
8 *Republik der Arbeiter*, September, 1851.
9 New York *Tribune*, July 3, 1850.

lot upon which to erect their buildings, but the offers were refused.

Outside the larger cities the co-operative principle met with better success among the English-speaking workmen, and for obvious reasons.[10] Not as much capital was required in the smaller cities, and usually the capital that was needed could be more easily collected. The trade was smaller in the smaller areas and the association could give employment to a larger percentage of those within the organisation and could thus shut off the competition offered by their own members who worked for employers. This was true of the tailors of Buffalo. After an unsuccessful strike, they formed an association with a membership of 108, and in October, 1850, were able to give employment to 80 of these.

Many of the associations were far enough away from immigration centres to be free from the competition of those with lower standards of living. The large and increasing mass of immigrants coming to this country, and especially to the eastern cities, made it possible for employers at the immigration centres to get cheap labour, and made it impossible for the associations, even had everything else been favourable, to increase their capital in proportion to the increase in immigration.

Then, too, many of the so-called productive associations of labourers outside New York would be better called associations of small capitalists or master workmen, as there were not a few such corporations formed in which each member contributed several hundred or even a few thousand dollars. When the strike of the workers in the iron foundries of Pittsburgh failed, the trade as a whole discussed the establishment of a co-operative foundry,[11] but nothing resulted from this discussion. Instead, about a dozen of the strikers went to Wheeling, each invested $3,000, and a shop for self-employment was opened.[12] Another small group collected a capital of $25,000, and were given a bonus of a like amount by the people of Steubenville, Ohio, to induce them to locate their shop at that place.[13] A third and

10 Co-operative newspapers became quite common in the West. Among the more noteworthy were: *Nonpareil* (Cincinnati, Ohio); *Signal* (St. Louis, Mo.); *Fact* (Columbus, Ohio); *Messenger* (Steubenville, Ohio); *Enterprise* (Alleghany, Penn.); *Union* (Pittsburgh, Penn.); *Herald* (Auburn, N. Y.); *Union* (Louisville, Ky.); and *Item* (Dayton, Ohio).

11 Pittsburgh *Post*, Dec. 10, 1849.

12 *Ibid.*

13 *Ibid.*, Apr. 15, 1850.

larger group, consisting of about 100 of the strikers, established a co-operative shop at Sharon, Pennsylvania. The amounts contributed by the members in this instance varied from $50 to $6,090, and made a total capital of about $100,000.[14] The very fact that a labourer could and did save several hundred dollars during the few years immediately preceding 1850 marks him as a man who would probably have been able to establish himself as an employer without being forced to share his profits with partners.

Doubtless the strongest reason for the non-acceptance of the doctrine of co-operation was the lack of capital. In order to be effective, the amount of capital needed was much greater than merely enough to purchase tools and to pay the rent on a workshop. It was essential that the association be able both to take advantage of the market by buying in large quantities, and at the same time to keep on hand a stock of goods sufficiently varied and extensive to tempt the prospective purchaser.

Another reason was the lack of business ability. Even when a man like Horace Greeley acted as treasurer for one of these associations, he could not be present all of the time to direct the efforts of the labourers. The associations lacked that element of taste and skill in fashioning those articles of trade which attract the most remunerative buyers.

Quite often there was dishonesty among the members themselves. When the German cabinetmakers were attempting to form an association, the question as to whether members would be allowed to complete work at home came up for discussion. The permission was refused because "constant control would become impossible."

Methods used by employers also prevented the spread of association. In some cases a leader who had become an advocate of association was promoted to the position of foreman or boss, and henceforth his interest was identified with that of his employer.

Another reason for the failure of productive associations was the failure of the law to protect them. This was prior to the period of general incorporation laws with limited liability, and each co-operative association, like other corporations, was compelled to go to the legislature for a special charter. Otherwise

14 New York *Tribune*, June 4, 1850.

each member was individually responsible for the liabilities of the entire association. The legislatures of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania at times even refused to grant charters to them.[15]

Finally, the influence of religion was brought to bear against workmen's co-operation in the general attack on Fourierism. The Catholic churchmen openly opposed association because they believed co-operative workshops to be the "first step to Socialism."[16] Protestant organisations were hardly less vehement in their denunciations of the principle. In discussing the moulders' union foundry in Cincinnati, the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, organ of the Methodist Evangelical church at that time, said:

"Quite recently the spirit of pretended anti-aristocracy and monopoly has revived, and men are again attempting to mend the existing state of human society. . . . A foundry, I believe, is to be erected, and each one is to give a certain proportion of money to its completion. What other things these men are going to do, I know not, neither do I care. One thing seems very clear, and it is this: however much the enterprise may now be lauded, and however flattering its prospects for ultimate success may appear, no long time will elapse before its abettors will be scattered, confounded and disappointed, and the whole affair itself swept from the community. *The attempt to improve on the divine law is not ridiculous simply; it is absurd and blasphemous.* If men cannot live and get along as God has arranged and ordained, they can get along in no other way. It is needless to dilate on this point, or to adduce any proof of the folly of Fourierism. Wherever it has been tried it has gone to nothing; and wherever hereafter it shall be tried, it will likely come to the same magnificent conclusion."[17]

The foregoing instances show the fate of producers' co-operation. Greater success attended consumers', or "distributive" co-operation, especially in New England. Although the matter was discussed in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and even as far west as Ohio and Illinois, yet in none of the industrial centres of these States was it put into successful operation. The term generally used for this form of co-operation, showing its Fourieristic origin, was "protective union."

15 See "Shoemakers in Pittsburgh," in *Ibid.*, Apr. 27, 1850; and "Tailors of Boston," in *Ibid.*, July 8, 1850. In the latter case, one legislator said: "It will not do to encourage the journeymen in such movements; it would ruin the employers."

16 *Ibid.*, Sept. 3, 1850.

17 Quoted in *Quaker City*, July 7, 1849.

In New York City, various organisations framed on the protective union principle were attempted. The New York Protective Union was established in 1847. In a little over three years it had enrolled a membership of approximately 400, though not all of these restricted their purchase of produce, groceries, and bread to the union store. The total sales for the year ending December 31, 1850, were only $29,222.15, in spite of the fact that at least one-fifth of this amount was sold at a profit to non-members. This amount included, besides, the income of a co-operative smith and wheelwright shop,[18] operated in connection with the store and bakery. Two years later, the total receipts for the year had advanced to but $37,900.21,[19] of which at least one-fourth was sold to others than members. This was, without doubt, the most successful store outside New England at this time. The Economical Exchange Association reported after fourteen months' trial that although it sold goods 10 per cent cheaper than could be bought elsewhere in New York City, it had enrolled but forty-four members.[20] The protective union established in Philadelphia did not live through the year 1850;[21] while a similar attempt in Baltimore existed scarcely long enough to chronicle its birth.

Even such a promising institution as the Co-operative Labour League, founded by Pond in New York,[22] did not receive the support of the labourers, although it required no initiation fee for the purchase of goods, no dues for the upkeep of its stores, saddled no possible losses upon its members, and asked only a deposit of 25 cents for the purchase of a pass-book and certificate of membership. The list of those with whom this organisation had contracts in January, 1851, included two hatters, three shoe dealers, three grocers, two printers, two clothiers and tailors, one daguerreotypist, one dealer in firewood, and one chair maker.[23] At this time the board of managers reported that, "considering the amount of labor to be performed, and the prejudice and suspicions to be removed, the board has every reason to be satisfied with the progress made and the prospects of the league, and believes that the more the objects of the league are known, the more its operations are understood, the greater will be its suc-

18 New York *Tribune*, Jan. 20, 1851.
19 *Ibid.*, Jan. 20, 1853.
20 *Ibid.*, Aug. 15, 1850.
21 Philadelphia *Ledger*, June 14, 1850.
22 See above, I, 509.
23 New York *Tribune*, Jan. 16, 1851.

cess and benefits." [24] One month later the board reported its first discount, which, for some of the members, amounted to $2 a month. After three months' trial, in spite of the fact that the number of dealers with whom contracts were held had been increased to twenty-eight, located in different parts of the city, the board was still engaged in the arduous task of overcoming "much ignorance and prejudice, and some opposition." The league had at least the verbal support of the New York City Industrial Congress and yet it was soon forced to give up the struggle.

It may at first seem strange that nowhere else did the principle of distributive co-operation gain strength comparable with that in New England. The reasons for this may be briefly stated as follows: In the first place, humanitarianism in the United States centred in New England. Here were proposed and discussed more plans for uplifting mankind than were found in other sections; here the emotions of men as well as their intellects were enlisted in the proposed schemes; and here a larger percentage of agitators, exhorters, and philosophers were willing to put their shoulders to the wheel and to lead as well as direct. In the second place, the general movement for higher wages in 1843 to 1844 failed in New England while it succeeded in a measure elsewhere. This was partly due to the prevalence in New England of trades in which women could be profitably employed. Added to this failure, female employment existed under conditions, which, to say the least, were unsatisfactory. This strengthened the humanitarian movement and increased the number of persons from the upper and middle classes willing to lend their aid to any scheme which promised to ameliorate the condition of the masses.

The success of the protective union in New England during the decade from 1848 to 1858 meant the failure or the exclusion of the other labour movements of the period. Producers' association was given weak support in a few cases; but these were connected with, rather than isolated from, the distributive idea. Land reform had a few supporters here, but it never assumed the general aspect which it manifested in New York or New Jersey. On the other hand, the ten-hour legislative movement

[24] *Ibid.*, Jan. 13, 1851.

was perhaps stronger here than elsewhere, owing to the same support which made distributive co-operation a factor.

Building associations, on the other hand, were quite successful for a time. By the latter part of 1850 they had found their way into nearly all of the eastern cities, and had enrolled large numbers of the workingmen as members. It was estimated in February, 1852, that in New York City alone there were 40 building associations with a membership of 20,090.[25] The third annual report of one of these, the American Benefit Association, shows receipts of $170,147.62, of which $101,413.50 came from "profits on 272½ shares."

Paradoxical as it may seem, the very means by which the promoters of these building associations hoped to defeat the purposes of the land speculators only increased the power of the latter. The growth of the sentiment for owning a home created a greater demand for the land available to the city people. Rather than sell the land in 50 or 100 acre blocks, at farm prices, to be resold at building-lot rates, the speculators themselves plotted the land and, by catching advertisements, made it appear that they offered the same advantages to the worker as did the mutual associations. In fact, the building association movement and the land reform movement were antagonistic to each other. They had nothing in common except a desire to secure homes for the masses. The advocates of the former had never favoured the principles of the latter. They accepted the existing order of land ownership and urged the workingmen to take advantage of all opportunities to secure a home under it. The land reformers condemned building associations because they saw in them simply a different form of land speculation.

With the return of rising prices in the latter part of 1852, the activity of the building associations began to decline. Many of the labourers lost what they had invested in the enterprises, because they were unable to keep up the payments and at the same time meet the increasing prices for food, clothing, and rents. A few of the associations survived the next two years, but the labourers ceased to take the interest in them which was manifested in 1850 and 1851.

[25] *Ibid.*, Mar. 3, 1852.

CHAPTER VII

THE NEW TRADE UNIONISM

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BEGINNINGS, 1850–1852

Modern trade unionism may be said to begin with the first half of the decade of the fifties. There is an impressive difference between the "pure and simple" unionism of the middle of the decade and the unionism of the thirties, the forties, and the beginning of this decade. Stripped of universal and glowing ideals, without establishing a single labour paper to carry an appeal to the country, the skilled trades settled down to the cold business of getting more pay for themselves by means of permanent and exclusive organisations. Here begins that separation from common labour which eventually was to raise the pay of

the skilled mechanic far above the level of immigrant competition and to distinguish American unionism from that of any other country. Instead of experiments in co-operation or leadership by humanitarians we find rules for apprenticeship, closed shop, minimum wage, time and method of payment, initiation fees and dues, funds for strike benefits, union employment offices, and the exclusion of employers, politicians, and friends of labour not actually working at the trade. This new unionism was, indeed, short-lived, for the depression of 1855 to 1862, intensified by the panic of 1857, shattered most of the organisations. It was not until thirty years later, in the decade of the eighties, that the policies of 1853 became fully justified in a nation-wide, permanent trade unionism.

It was in the year 1850 that we find the beginnings of the trade union effort to extricate itself from the humanitarianism of the forties. In August, 1849, the Boston tailors went on strike for a higher scale of prices. This was followed by a number of strikes in other places during 1850, 1851, and 1852, many of them unsuccessful. In 1850 in New York there were strikes by boot makers, bricklayers, carpenters, painters, coopers, cordwainers, printers, and common labourers. In 1851 labourers, painters, and tailors went out on strike; in 1852 carpenters, cartmen, coopers, 'longshoremen, and sail makers. In 1850 the printers of Philadelphia took the initiative and were followed by eighteen other trades.[1] In the absence of trade agreements, strikes and threats to strike were the only weapons available to the workers. It happened in some of the trades in the early fifties, such as carpenters, painters, etc., that they struck in the spring of the year for increases in wages and in the fall to prevent decreases. In the first part of this period all strikes were shop strikes. The major part of the shops in a trade might be working while the remainder were on strike.

These strikes and their outcome seemed to confirm the position of those who advocated co-operation. The strike found an ever ready and untiring opponent in Horace Greeley. Because he was always recognised as the friend of the worker, the less radical were apt to listen to his advice, and thus his reactionary influence during the beginning of this decade must have been

[1] New York *Tribune*, Nov. 29, 1850.

an obstacle to the development of trade union ideas. In an editorial called forth by the tailors' strike in Boston, he said: "A scale of prices so established is a stone rolled up in a mountain; the first jar sends it headlong down again. If all the Trades in New York could fix their own prices to-day, leaving out system of Labour, Wages, and Trade essentially as they are now, a very few months would serve to sap and subvert the whole." Greeley was directly antagonistic to the unions of 1850. "If the present general movement should terminate in nothing, the result will hardly surprise many, for lack of novelty. Labor has banded, and resolved, and indulged in brave words." [2] After a few strike failures and after the unions had adopted resolutions favourable to productive associations, he said: "It is mainly because the Trades organisations of 1850 tend to prepare for this (productive association) — no matter how unconsciously — that we regard them with approbation and lively hope." By 1851, his attitude had changed somewhat. He wrote editorially in reply to an attack upon trade unions: "The case is this: Workmen find their wages declining, whether from the incoming of more hands than are wanted, or from the natural tendency of employers, who are themselves struggling in the world and must live, to depress the pay of the employed. They see that being isolated they are weak and helpless. . . . The Trade Unions may not be always managed in the most judicious manner; it is not to be expected that they should, and we have often taken occasion to express our decided disagreement with the proceedings of some of them. But in the present general anarchy of labor, they are an excellent element." [3] Two years later, in 1853, although Greeley hoped that the labourers would yet accept productive association, he thoroughly sided with the unions in their demands.

Among the Germans, Weitling opposed trade unionism, and for the same reason that Greeley first favoured it; namely, because he feared that it would result in the acceptance of productive association. This would have meant the defeat of his own scheme for a bank of exchange.[4]

The relation of the agrarians to the unionists was less strained.

2 *Ibid.*, July 24, 1850.
3 *Ibid.*, Apr. 2, 1851.
4 *Republik der Arbeiter*, September, 1850, pp. 137, 139.

Never exactly hostile to strikes, they yet took occasion to impress upon the workers the inadequacy of trade unionism and the necessity of supporting the sure means of amelioration — free homesteads.

If the trade unions of 1850 can be said to have had definite antecedents, they were the benevolent societies composed of both journeymen and employers. A few of the latter from the start had some protective features, but, if present, these were at least subordinate to the beneficial features. Some were even prevented by charter from entering into any other activities than those pertaining to sickness or death benefits. Thus the charter of the Cordwainers' Benefit Society obligated its secretary to file annually with the county clerk a sworn affidavit that the society during the previous year had neither directly nor indirectly undertaken any other proposition than "extending the right hand of fellowship to each other when in distress, sickness, or in the hour of death." [5] Employers were quite often admitted to membership in the benefit societies, and could largely influence the policies of the association. For this reason, when the trade union movement began, the employers tried to shift it back again to the old benevolent foundations. They were sometimes successful in this. At a meeting of the journeymen dyers of New York, called for the purpose of perfecting an organisation for protective purposes, "an able speech from one gentleman (later found to be the son of a very wealthy dyer in the Bowery) led the meeting into quite another direction than was intended in the beginning. It was agreed not to strike for wages, but only to form a society, which the meeting decided to call the 'Dyers' Benevolent Society.'" [6]

Some of the benevolent societies retained their old organisations intact while their members formed separate trade unions. There were others which either changed their own organisation so as to admit the union features, or else the society took the lead in the formation of the new movement. The former was true of the American tailors of New York as the following extract from the minutes of their meeting shows: "The meeting was called together to see whether the unincorporated Beneficial Society, formed last November and but few in number

[5] New York *Tribune*, May 8, 1850. [6] *Ibid.*, May 29, 1850.

should be continued any longer or a new Protective Society formed. The latter conclusion was unanimously adopted." [7] The Benevolent Society of Operative Masons did the same after formally passing the following resolutions: "That after this meeting we intend to raise the initiating fee upon all men working over three months in the city and not joining the Society; and in no case to admit them in their work after this meeting in opposition to the Society:" [8] The United Order of Manufacturing Jewelers retained their benevolent features, but took the lead in calling a meeting of the whole trade, "to take such measures as are deemed necessary to transform the Society into a Trade Union on a permanent basis." [9]

After the beginning of 1850, wherever there were both benevolent and protective sections in the constitutions of a labour organisation, the latter were considered more important than the former. In order to gain strength of numbers, the bricklayers' union banded with the Bricklayers' and Plasterers' Benevolent Society of the city of New York. But at the same time, the president of the former organisation said: "As regards our benevolent movements, they are separate and distinct from our primary organization — our protection features remain unchanged and are cherished as a principle by us more than any other." [10]

A few of the older benevolent societies reorganised entirely at the beginning of the union movement. This was the case with the men's branch of the journeymen cordwainers.[11] Some of the trades which had not maintained benevolent societies as early as those mentioned here, combined with their trade unionism some of the features of the older societies. This was true of the printers and the tailors. The former at first included the employers in the organisation, but later caused them to withdraw. The objects of the printers' association, as it was first organised in the latter part of 1849, were the maintenance of a fair rate of wages, the general improvement of the character and condition of the craft, and the relief of the sick and needy in the trade. Membership was thrown open to all connected with the trade, twenty-one years old and over, whether as em-

7 *Ibid.*, June 10, 1850.
8 *Ibid.*, May 29, 1850.
9 *Ibid.*, May 9, 1850.
10 *Ibid.*, Aug. 6, 1850.
11 *Ibid.*, Apr. 9, 1850.

ployers, journeymen, or otherwise.[12] The objects of the Tailors' Society were similar to those of the printers, except that it excluded the employers from the beginning.[13]

The first requisite in the formation of a trade union was to call together the men in the trade, determine what wages each individual was actually receiving, and then to settle upon a scale sufficiently high to meet the growing cost of living. These investigations at times included much more than the mere subject of wages and disclosed information upon which the trade union policies were constructed. The Boston printers' union started an investigation early in 1849 with a view to fixing an adequate scale of prices for the trade. It was found that the highest prices paid to journeymen averaged but $480 per year — and this for twelve hours per day, seven days a week. The compensation for those employed in the offices of the weekly press was scarcely two-thirds that amount. It was found also that in many of the weekly press and book and job offices no standard of prices for customers was maintained. Employers took work for the best prices they could get, and then adjusted wages accordingly.[14]

Early in 1850 the benevolent society of the New York printers undertook a similar investigation, though more extensive in its scope. All engaged in the trade in any manner whatsoever were asked to contribute information, especially with regard to the following points: the time lost in waiting for copy; the amount of proof corrected in proportion to composition; the number of proofs and revises required, and whether pulled by the office or by the workmen; prevalence of favouritism in giving out copy; alterations, how many, and whether any are not paid for; especially the prices paid for different kinds of work; the number of men employed; the number of boys, and their wages; the average earnings per week of each person; the number of hours each is employed; the time and manner of payments; general condition of the office as to order and comfort; conditions of press work, job work, stereotyping, etc.; in short, "everything that may be of service in arriving at a clear and just view of the state of Printers in this City."[15]

12 *Ibid.*, Jan. 9, 1850.
13 *Ibid.*, Sept. 10, 1849.
14 *Ibid.*, Jan. 29, 1849.
15 *Ibid.*, Apr. 8, 1850.

These inquiries were continued through a period of about six weeks. When the reports were received and tabulated they were used as the basis for trade regulations by the union. It was estimated that there were engaged in the printing business in New York at this time about 2,000 persons, including: foremen, 150; compositors, 1,000; pressmen, 200; boys at case, 500; boys at press, 100; girls at press, 100.[16] Only one office was paying as much as 32 cents per 1,000 ems; six offices paid 30 cents,[17] and so on down to only 17 cents, although this last price was not very common. The average price paid to compositors was 23 cents. Allowing for time lost in waiting for copy, letter, and proofs, the journeymen did not average 5,000 ems per day or $7 per week. The report divided the workers into three classes, according to the amount of wages received. In five of the best paying offices in the city, the journeymen received $12.50 per week; but these were the daily paper offices, and the investigations showed that this amount was made by extra work approximating an average day of sixteen hours, under conditions of exposure "leading to *certain* premature old age and *probable* early death." In the second class were put the best workmen on the evening and weekly papers and the best paid of the book and job printers. These men received from 25 to 29 cents per 1,000 ems while the pressmen in the same offices received from $8 to $10 per week "when at work." The third class included those journeymen in the meaner kinds of book and job work who received only from 17 to 25 cents per 1,000 ems and whose earnings never exceeded $6 per week "when at work." This latter was the class whose condition the union was especially anxious to improve. The chief recommendation concerning wages was a uniform scale of prices.

A committee of the union was appointed to draft a scale of prices to be submitted to the employers, but because of concessions by certain employers, and the lack of an opportune time to force demands upon unwilling employers, the scale did not go into effect until February, 1851. In January, the union used the following notice as a means of calling attention to their action: "By resolution (passed unanimously) of the New

16 *Ibid.*, May 22, 1850; *Doc. Hist.*, VII, 109–131.

17 Soon after the report was published, the proprietors of a second daily paper volunteered to advance its prices to 32 cents.

York Printers' Union, the scale of prices adopted by that body is to go into effect on and after the first day of February, 1851." [18]

The general return of high prices in 1850 made it possible for the labourers to demand an increase of wages with some assurance of having their demands granted. One of the first trades to seize this opportunity was that of the New York carpenters. Early in the year, a mass meeting of the trade was called "to consider the best method of increasing present wages." [19] After much discussion, the members of the trade decided not to work for less than $1.75 per day after March 10, 1850.[20] On the day set the demand was made of the employers individually for the advance in wages. The next day 700 carpenters met to hear the decision of their bosses. Some employers had agreed to the scale demanded, while others who had been paying only $1.25 per day instead of $1.50 declared that they could raise the wages of their journeymen to no more than $1.50 per day. Those journeymen who were promised $1.75 per day were allowed to return to their work, but all others were induced to hold out until they could get the advance. The great demand for buildings at this time in New York aided the journeymen in winning the strike.

Other trades, such as the bricklayers and plasterers, provided for the falling off of the trade during the dull season. When they had fully organised, they demanded of their employers wages according to the following schedule: "Commencing on the first day of March up to the thirteenth day of November, inclusive, $2.00 per day; the balance of the year $1.75 per day, and no three-quarter days to be allowed, except the men are prevented from work by inclement weather, or any other justifiable cause. The provisions of this resolution to take effect on and after the organisation of this Society." [21] However, the employers began to cut down the wages before November 13, and it again became necessary for the union to act in order to maintain its previous scale. Accordingly, on September 4, by unanimous vote, the union "declared that they would not work after Wednesday, the seventh inst. for a sum less than two dollars a day, on and after that day."

18 New York *Tribune*, Jan. 9, 1851.
19 *Ibid.*, Feb. 28, 1850.
20 *Ibid.*, Mar. 6, 1850.
21 *Ibid.*, May 28, 1850.

Many of the unions established minimum rates of wages, the actual rates to be varied according to the ability of the individual workers. These were either flat rates, as in the case of the bakers who established a minimum of $9 per week [22] or else graded rates according to the quality of the work done. An example of the latter is that of the German smiths and wheelwrights, who fixed minimum rates for workmen at the first fire and wheelwrights at the first bench at $7.50 per week; at the second fire and on the second bench, $6; and at the third fire, $4.50.[23] Other unions, after fixing the minimum wage, also set the limits within which increases above this could be made. The upholsterers' union fixed the lowest rates for its journeymen at $7 per week, and allowed "an addition of twenty-five per cent, according to the workmen's abilities." The jewelers made no special effort to raise their existing wages, since the latter were higher than they had been for several years previously on account of the California trade; but they realised that an increase in the number of workers in the trade would mean a reduction of their wages. Hence they too adopted a minimum wage "to prevent oppression by employers."[24] The general increase of wages asked by the unions in 1850 was from 20 per cent to 25 per cent over that which had been the average wage before the regulations for a uniform or a minimum wage were made.

When the wages were paid at piece-work rates, the same general regulations governed the trade. The constitution of the Carvers' Protective Union of New York declared: "The object of this Society is to procure an advance of 25 per cent upon the present prices received for day or week work, and to fix at said rate the compensation for all men so employed." With regard to piece-work, the union voted that "a carver engaged on piece-work shall not fix the price of the same, but he shall call for that purpose all of the carvers employed with him in the shop, and they shall form a committee to fix the price which the employer has to pay for such piece-work."[25] This rule was followed by other unions also, allowing the workers in a certain shop to fix the definite amount of piece-work wages,

[22] *Ibid.*, Mar. 28, 1850.
[23] *Ibid.*, May 23, 1850.
[24] *Ibid.*, Apr. 13, 1850.
[25] *Ibid.*, May 13, 1850.

so long as such rates conformed to the general regulations of the union. In case there was a disagreement between the employer and his journeymen over the matter of these piece-work wages, the union took upon itself the duty of enforcing the wage scale set by its members in that shop. In other cases, such as the journeymen watch-case makers,[26] the union itself fixed definite piece-work rates, applicable to the entire trade.

Another consideration closely related to the wages question was the time and manner of payments. The German smiths and wheelwrights declared that they would not work otherwise "than by the week" and voted to exclude from the union those members of the trade who would "longer work by the month." Among the objectionable features which the printers' union of New York found in the cheaper offices was bad and irregular pay — bad in the sense that the men were forced to accept depreciated western bills at face value, and irregular in the sense of uncertainty of getting anything at all. Some of the employers paid not oftener than once a fortnight, and then only "in country bills." Among some of the journeymen there occurred irregular pay because of an unfair distribution of copy due to favouritism of foremen, who then added to their own earnings by "squeezing" the favoured journeymen. These were some of the evils to be corrected by a minimum wage and by regular and certain payments for all work done.

Still another consideration which affected the payment of the journeymen was brought clearly to the foreground in the early organisation of the tailors of Boston. In this trade the labourers were paid for piece-work, and the employers quite often claimed "bad work" when the finished product was returned to them and consequently made deductions from the already paltry wages of their journeymen. This was one of the grievances which caused the Boston tailors to strike and which the union attempted to eliminate.

Once organised, a price list was made out which fixed in a general way the wages for the entire trade. A committee was then appointed to call upon each individual employer and ask his acceptance of the new scale. If the employer accepted the

[26] New York *Herald*, Apr. 19, 1850.

conditions, his men were permitted to remain at work; if he did not, a strike of the men in his shop was declared. As generally happened, this resulted in shop strikes rather than trade strikes. A part of the members of the trade, usually a majority, remained at their work and supported their fellow-workers who went out on strike. General strikes of the entire trade, in 1850, were looked upon with disfavour. Some of the unions had provisions like the following in their constitutions: "General strikes are a last resort, and shall only be adopted at a regular meeting, and then only by a two-thirds vote." [27]

In order to avoid direct collisions with the employers where it was thought that other means of settling the differences might be effective, some of the unions allowed their members to organise a shop union for the purpose of settling minor details, stipulating, however, that the general rules of the trade union must be adhered to. Thus the carvers' protective union allowed its members in each shop to fix the price of piece-work in that shop so long as it conformed to the general trade union minimum wage. The printers' union recommended the establishment of chapels in each office.[28] It was thought that many of the petty differences could thus be settled peaceably without the intervention of the entire union; and it was believed that some of the employers would be more willing to deal with their own employés in matters of such detail than they would be to deal with the union.

In a few instances sympathetic strikes were called. When the journeymen tailors working on wholesale trade goods were striking in July, 1850, they called for the support of the other tailors. "They resolved that the tailors making custom work should also strike, and remain on the (Southern work) strike which the employers had sustained until the entire bill of prices shall be adopted by every employer in the city." [29] At the same time, "The Shoemakers resolved to make a strike, if this would assist the tailors in their endeavours." [30]

Nearly all of the unions made provision for strike benefits.

27 Constitution of the Bricklayers' and Plasterers' Union, in New York *Tribune*, July 18, 1850.

28 The chapel is a "meeting place of all the journeymen (and the apprentices in the last year of their time), who elect one of their number as 'Father,' who presides over their meetings, and (except on extraordinary occasions) acts as their spokesman." *Ibid.*, May 22, 1850.

29 *Ibid.*, July 25, 1850.

30 *Ibid.*, July 31, 1850.

In the constitution of the German smiths and wheelwrights, we find as one of the purposes of the organisation, "The support of those who may be thrown out of work through their adherence to the Constitution." [31] The carvers' protective union voted that when a member of the union submitted a scale of prices to his employer, "if any such employer refuses to pay the stipulated price, and throws the Carver out of employ, he shall leave such shop and so long as he remains without work he will be entitled to receive four dollars per week." [32] Some unions, like the coach painters' and the masons', made a difference in the amount which the married men and single men could receive as union benefits. The former voted that "Any member losing time by conforming to the rules of the Society, is entitled to three dollars a week if married and two dollars if a single man." Still other unions, such as the gilders' and cordwainers', provided for the families of the married men on strike, in addition to the amount to which the striker was entitled. The latter union voted: "In case of a strike, single men are allowed five dollars per week tramping money, and married men three dollars, besides a dollar and a half for a wife, and a half dollar for each child under ten years." [33] Usually there was no defined length of time that a striker must have been a member of the union before he could claim strike benefits. In a few cases, however, such as that of the steam-boiler makers' protective society, it was provided that a member must have been enrolled at least six months before he could receive strike benefits.[34]

The chief sources of revenue for the unions were the initiation fees and the regular dues. The former varied from 25 cents to $5 and the latter from 6 cents to 50 cents per month, or in a few cases to $6.50 per year, payable quarterly. The most common fee was $1, while the dues were generally 25 cents per month. Another source of revenue, though not a large one, was the fines imposed upon union members. These were levied for infractions of union rules, such as working in a shop with other than union members, working for less than the union scale, etc. These fines varied from $1 to $12 for each offence.

31 *Ibid.*, May 23, 1850.
32 *Ibid.*, May 13, 1850.
33 *Ibid.*, May 14, 1850.
34 *Ibid.*, May 6, 1850.

Occasionally fines were imposed for non-attendance at the meetings of the union. A third, though exceptional, source of revenue was the financial aid received from other unions in time of strikes.

In order to secure employment for those labourers who could not come to terms with their employers during a time of strike, and also to secure work for those members of the trade who came into the city from time to time, "houses of call," labour exchanges, etc., were established by the various trades. The operative bakers' union was perhaps the first to start this system. Their house of call was a place where "the names of all journeymen out of employ will be registered, and where those employers who require workmen will come. The capacity of each man will be ascertained, and the amount of wages to which he is entitled according to his standing." [35] This union probably adopted this system from the Scotch, because the man most prominent in the union at this time, Berham, was a Scotchman, and had pointed out to the other members the advantages of the system as it was used in Scotland, before it became a part of the American bakers' programme. The union finally rented a hall at $300 per year, which was kept open at all times of the day for the accommodation of those seeking employment and for those seeking the services of journeymen. The hall was also used for the meetings of the union. After the house of call had once been established, the union placed the following notice in the newspapers of New York for the purpose of enlightening the employers: "To Boss Bakers.— The Operative Bakers' Union House of Call . . . is now open at 127 Grand Street daily, from 6 A. M. till 9 P. M. and on Sundays from 3 till 9, and a keeper is always in attendance to give every facility to Bosses, from City or Country, either visiting or writing the House for men." [36]

The bricklayers' and plasterers' union established a similar exchange "where the unemployed can have their names registered and the employer procure them." Other trades had a special employment committee whose duty it was to aid those members who needed employment and to seek the employers who needed journeymen. Other devices having the same end

[35] *Ibid.*, Apr. 9, 1850. [36] *Ibid.*, July 1, 1850.

in view were used by the unions, such as having boxes put up at various places where either employers or union members could drop a note telling of their needs.

Greeley and others were working at this time for the establishment of a labour exchange for all trades. Greeley especially advocated the construction by the city, or, in the event of the failure of that plan, the construction by all trades combined, of a building which would have provision for the meetings of all unions, and at the same time accommodations for an employment bureau "where every man could always find work and be thus prevented from idleness." In his address to the printers, referred to elsewhere, he said: "What I would suggest would be the union and organisation of all workers for their mutual improvement and benefit, leading to the erection of a spacious edifice at some central point in our city to form a Laborers' Exchange, just as commerce now has its exchange, very properly. Let the new exchange be erected as a joint stock property, paying a fair dividend to those whose money erected it."

It had at first been the hope of the organisers that the unions would constitute a sort of legislative and administrative body and that the entire trade would follow its leadership, regardless of membership or non-membership in the union. Thus we find such calls as the following: "All the journeymen boot and shoe makers are requested to attend a mass meeting on Thursday next. . . . The object is the interest of the trade and the rise of wages by means of strikes. By order of the Trade Union of the United Boot-makers." [37] The lack of co-operation among non-members and the practice of the employers of pressing into service boys and newly arrived immigrants who were not even skilled in the trade soon proved the futility of such a hope. At first the unions gave all possible encouragement and assistance to those new arrivals. Among the objects of the Operative Bakers' Union, as stated in its constitution, was "to advise and protect all newly arrived immigrant Bakers"; [38] and similarly, in the constitution of the smiths and wheelwrights, "counsel, aid and procuring work for newly arrived mechanics." [39] With the immense increase of immigra-

[37] *Ibid.*, July 31, 1850. [38] *Ibid.*, May 13, 1850. [39] *Ibid.*, May 23, 1850.

tion, there arose all sorts of immigrant agencies, most of which had for their chief aim the exploitation of the labourers. To prevent this, the various labour organisations prepared regulations for the government of the newly arrived workers. At a meeting in April, 1850, of the joiners and cabinetmakers, it was "moved and resolved that hand-bills of the Association should be posted in the Emigrant boarding-houses in order to inform the newly arrived journeymen where they are to direct themselves in order to get work at adequate wages, and to prevent their getting into the clutches of the work-usurers. A motion was also adopted, that like advertisements shall be sent at some future time to the principal newspapers of Germany." [40] The labour exchanges and employment bureaus mentioned above were also established primarily for the service of immigrants.

As stated previously, the Germans, at least in theory, favoured the associations for productive purposes more than did the American workmen. Their contact with the Americans and the fact that the Germans, in practice, encountered the same difficulties in such a scheme as did the few American labourers who tried it, prevented the project from becoming extensive. In its place, though perhaps a little later, the Germans took up the trade union principles which characterised the Americans of the period. In fact, when the Germans had once become thoroughly acquainted with the idea of combining for purposes of collective action against their employers, they were at times even more successful than their American co-labourers.

In general, all of the nationalities represented in the various trades co-operated with each other in their attempt to better the conditions of labour. In some of the trades, the most prominent nationalities represented formed separate societies or unions which had means of co-operation, often adopting the same constitution and consulting with each other before any definite action was taken in important matters. Some of the unions thus composed of single nationalities combined later in the year into single trade unions, having the same officers. Others included from the beginning several nationalities. The Operative Bakers' Union, for instance, started with American, German, English, Scotch, and Irish members. Where there was any

[40] *Ibid.*, Apr. 27, 1850.

considerable number of more than one nationality represented in the same union, the proceedings were generally given in the language most familiar and were then translated into the other languages. In these instances, the president of the union was chosen from the most numerous representation, while each other nationality had a vice-president. These unions found the process of translation of important speeches, motions, etc. into two or more languages very tiresome and much time was necessarily required. In many cases, with the growth in membership, the union was divided into several sections, one for each nationality. These sections usually met in different rooms of the same building and on the same night. Wherever this was true there was always close communication among the various sections.

One union which, perhaps because of its size, is as representative of this co-operation between the Americans and the Germans as any other union, was that of the tailors. Up to the time of the tailors' strike in July, 1850, the Americans (mostly Irish) and the Germans were not on the best of terms. A part of the Germans had for a time favoured association for productive purposes, while the Americans had not. In spite of this, the Germans joined with the Americans after the latter had been striking about two weeks. This resulted in the formation of a union having about 2,000 members; and although the union was not entirely successful in its strike, the strike itself cemented the Germans and the Americans together.

Before the year 1850, there had been but little action taken by the trades themselves concerning the regulation of apprentices. The separate trades' associations and unions soon began to take action to protect themselves against the poor and unprepared workmen, and in many cases to limit the number of workers in their trade. Among the first to take such action were the printers. In 1847, the typographical society of Baltimore limited the number of apprentices in the ratio of one apprentice to three journeymen,[41] and in January, 1850, it limited the number to four in any office.[42] This was to prevent some of the cheaper offices from employing only boys and bad workmen. The New York printers were a little later in attempting to correct the evil caused by the prevalence of "rats" in the trade,

41 See Barnett, *The Printers*, 167. 42 New York *Times*, Dec. 6, 1850.

but nevertheless they too took action in the matter soon after their investigations were completed and their report submitted.[43] The members of the trade, when asked to contribute to this report, were asked especially to give the number of boys in each office and their wages. In the 82 offices that reported, it was found that there were 300 apprentices to 850 journeymen. It was estimated at the same time that in the whole city there were 1,000 journeymen compositors to 600 apprentice compositors, and 200 journeymen pressmen to 100 boys and 100 girls at the press. From these and other conditions which were exposed at the time, the committee which compiled the report concluded that the superabundance of labour and the prevalent low wages were due to the extensive use of boys and the lack of a regular system of apprenticeship.

Then, too, the employers themselves had failed to work in harmony and there were no established rates for printing. Some of the employers accepted work very cheaply in order to prevent their rivals from getting it. To make anything on such a contract, the employer must hire cheap labour. Hence a boy, but a few weeks or at the most a few months at the trade, would be given a chance at the "stick" at wages which were one-half or less than one-half of what the journeymen were receiving. This practice flooded the market with poorly prepared workmen, with men who really did not learn the trade until they had been recognised as journeymen. The evil did not stop with the setting of the apprentice at work at the "case" as a compositor, for as soon as he had begun to feel that he should be earning as much as other compositors, he left the cheap office and sought work as a full-fledged journeymen compositor elsewhere.

With the report of the committee at hand, the union demanded a reduction of the number of apprentices. It declared that "those boys who are kept, should be bound by an indenture, or legal instrument, which should compel them to serve a certain number of years at the business." The communication to the employers attempted to point out to them that the system then in vogue was really to the detriment of the employers themselves; that whenever the journeymen were forced to take the time to correct the mistakes of these boys, the employers were

43 See above, I, 580–582.

experiencing a real loss which more than compensated for the gain in wages which the cheaper help left to the employer. In other places than New York, some of the printers' unions fixed minute regulations for the government of apprentices. Thus in Cincinnati, members of the typographical union included in their regulations the following rules: 1. Apprentices must serve four years; 2. The wages for apprentices shall be: first year, $2.50 per week; second year, $3 per week; third, $3.50; and fourth, $4; 3. No employer may take a boy from another office except for cause; 4. No employer may give overwork to apprentices; 5. The employer must teach the apprentice the whole trade.[44]

Among the rules for the government of the New York Hat Finishers' Protective Society, as set forth by the constitution, we find several referring to apprentices. The length of service was fixed at four years; and if the four years came to a close before the apprentice attained the age of twenty-one years, he could not become a journeyman until he reached that age. As to the short-time system of apprenticeship, the constitution said: "Any man who binds himself for a short period after the age of twenty-one is considered an intruder upon the rights of the journeymen, and any employer engaging such a 'foul journeyman' will not be held blameless for thus opposing the known rules of the trade with respect to the apprentice system."[45] The rules also stated that, as far as possible, all apprentices must serve their full time with the same employer. Any shop which had over three apprentices was declared "foul." Later in the year 1850 there was a concerted movement on the part of some of the employers to offer united resistance to the regulations of the journeymen, and, if possible, to break up the union. The union thereupon published the following set of resolutions to counteract this movement:

"Resolved, That boys apprenticing themselves to employers whose shops are conducted in violation of our trade rules, cannot be recognized by us as fair Journeymen Hat Finishers, when becoming of age. We would therefore call the particular attention of parents to the above fact, which should command their immediate attention, for we are aware of the existence of foul shops at present in the City of New York, whose superintendents would have no hesitation

[44] *Nonpareil*, May 29, 1851. [45] New York *Tribune*, June 1, 1850.

or conscientious scruples to advance every inducement to the persuasion of parents to bind their children to them, when at the same time these flattering superintendents are fully aware of their inability of teaching the first principles of hatting."[46]

Among the German cigarmakers there was no such unanimity of opinion concerning apprenticeship as among some of the other trades. At the first meeting of the Philadelphia organisation, in May, 1850, it was announced that the question of apprenticeship regulation would be taken up and discussed at the next meeting. Accordingly, both sides of the question were well represented and an animated debate took place. It was proposed that every boss should be obliged to bind his apprentice for three years. The opposition contended that the promotion and the welfare of the trade did not depend on the time in which any man would learn his trade, but only on his ability and capacities. Every man in America ought to be put in that situation which will be equal to his talents and his activity. If such a measure should be adopted, they would recall the time of German restrictions. The trade and the work must remain *free,* and every immigrant arriving here must be placed at liberty to embrace whatever employ or work will suit him best. The restrictions of three years would create a larger opposition than that of opposed capital. There was guarantee enough in the article of the constitution which had been adopted — that every member should prove his being a good cigar maker. Good work and unity would become their only ægis.

Defenders of the resolution contended that "bunglers" had ruined the trade and that the proposed resolutions were needed for the protection of the journeymen. After the vote was counted, it was found that there was a majority in favour of the apprenticeship regulations. This announcement caused several of the disappointed members of the organisation to withdraw from the meeting and later to form a society of their own. They admitted without restriction every cigar maker who would promise to keep up his dues and conform to their regulations. In other things than apprenticeship regulations they showed their willingness to co-operate with the members of the society

[46] *Ibid.*, Oct. 25, 1850.

they had left. The American cigar makers had also organised a union, which, when invited to do so by the German union first mentioned above, appointed a committee to confer with a similar committee from the German union on the subject of a union comprising both branches. This resulted in the formation of the United Cigar Makers' Union, one of whose objects was the restriction of the number of apprentices. At about the same time the cigar makers' union of Philadelphia fixed the period of apprenticeship at three years.[47]

Throughout the year 1850 various trades enacted apprenticeship regulations, at times specifically limiting the number of apprentices that any one shop might employ, while at other times fixing the number of years which each apprentice must serve before being accepted by the union as a journeyman. The carvers' protective union declared that "carvers who give employment are allowed a limited number of apprentices, but no cabinet-maker, foreman or carver can take apprentices."[48] The Varnishers' and Polishers' Association voted that no member of the trade might be proposed for membership in the association "who has not worked at the trade prior to the adoption (of the constitution of the society) not less than two years; and after the date of the formation of this Society, three years."[49] This union also limited the number of apprentices to two for any one employer. No person twenty-five years of age or over was accepted by the union as a regular apprentice.[50] After declaring against the sub-contracting system then used in their trade, the United Association of Coach Painters also discountenanced fugitive apprentices. Anyone "taking a sub-contract from a coach-painter shall employ practical coach painters. Said sub-contractor shall not employ or use an apprentice except he usually employs one or more men; two apprentices are allowed when he can satisfy the Society that he employs six men."[51] The silversmiths would not admit anyone into their union who had not served a regular apprenticeship.[52] The bricklayers and plasterers limited the number of apprentices which any one boss might have to three and they also had a regular system of rules for the government of apprentices.[53]

47 Philadelphia *Ledger*, Apr. 6, 1850.
48 New York *Tribune*, May 13, 1850.
49 *Ibid.*, June 29, 1850.
50 *Ibid.*, June 4, 1850.
51 *Ibid.*, May 15, 1850.
52 *Ibid.*, May 31, 1850.
53 *Ibid.*, May 25, 1850.

Thus it would be possible to consider a large proportion of the trades and show that in 1850 they were quite generally taking steps looking towards the limitation of apprentices. The same conditions would apply to the other eastern cities. One of the reasons given by the Philadelphia workers to explain the condition of their wages was the "great quantity of apprentices continually becoming free"; and this was one of the evils which the Philadelphia unions attempted to eliminate by means of trade regulations.

Some of the labour reformers of the period, looking at the labour movement from the outside, were opposed to the restriction of apprenticeship by the unions. John Campbell [54] wrote in the latter part of 1850:

"I now pass to the apprenticeship system. The Printers *exempli gratia,* decide that only a certain number of boys shall be taken as apprentices; the Hatters, Jewelers, Stonecutters, Saddlers, etc., we will say, act in a simlar manner.

"We will suppose that there are twenty thousand boys in Philadelphia, but under the new regulations of the Trades only fifteen thousand can be taken as apprentices. Will not the other five thousand consider themselves as outlaws? Will they not say —'Well, society has made us vagabonds and outcasts; we were willing to learn trades, but the rules of the trade associations explicitly require that we must be treated as outlaws — that we must not be permitted to be honest; as they have forced the fearful and terrible alternative upon us, and as we have no other refuge, we accept the fiat, dreadful though it be. As you have thrust us from your bosoms as outcasts, we will fearfully repay you. We will become thieves, burglars, footpads, robbers, drunkards, gamblers, and if needs be, murderers. No crime shall shame us; we will live, no matter how. Why should we blush for perpetrating crimes, seeing that we are forced to be vicious: Nay, we rejoice in our infamy.' Will not such be practical effects of the new Trades' regulations? Have the delegates looked at this portion of our movement? I say our movement, because, although the present method adopted practically prevents me from participating in their movements, yet I cordially sympathize with them in their undertaking." [55]

Woman in industry was another subject for regulation by the unions in the few trades where the practice had become general enough to be looked upon as an evil at this time. Not all the

[54] See above, I, 516–517.

[55] New York *Tribune*, Dec. 27, 1850

trades had this problem to face in 1850, but a few, such as the printers, hotel waiters, shoemakers and tailors,[56] took steps to rid themselves of the competition of women. Section 17 of the constitution of the journeymen cordwainers' union provided that no woman should be allowed to work in any of the shops controlled by the union, "except she be a member's wife or daughter;" and even in such cases the member himself should be held responsible to the society for the acts of the woman.[57] Other similar instances might be cited.

The development of the closed shop as a means of controlling the trade was somewhat slower than that of some of the other regulations. As stated before, most of the trade organisations believed that they would be able to enroll practically all of the journeymen in the unions or that those outside of the unions would be guided by its decisions. In this manner they would be able to eradicate their wrongs without resorting to the principle of the closed shop. In the declaration of the journeymen upholsterers' union we find: "It [the Union] is not a coalition to impose hard terms upon employers, but an association for the elevation, improvement, and support of all Journeymen. The only way in which the upholsterers can secure generous and uniform wages, and support in case of sickness and scarcity of work, is by combining to make their Society one of high character and influence, embracing every journeyman in the city and vicinity."[58] The Varnishers' and Polishers' Protective Association voted that "It is the duty of the members to inform all newcomers in the shop where they are employed of the established price of wages, and of the existence of this Society and the necessity of becoming a member."[59] The unions believed that they could control the trade and protect themselves against the competition of poor workmen by receiving the support of all acceptable journeymen and by their apprenticeship regulations, many of which practically meant a closed-shop policy.

The control which the unions exercised over the individual members was usually quite thorough. The following declaration is a common form of the statement of the purposes of such

[56] Not infrequently a strike in one of these trades was met by the employment of women, who were often retained even after the strike was settled.

[57] *Ibid.*, Apr. 9, 1850.

[58] *Ibid.*, Apr. 6, 1850.

[59] *Ibid.*, June 29, 1850.

organisations: "As the experience of the past has demonstrated the futility of individual efforts to resist aggression upon the interests of labor, and that the united exertions of all are necessary to that end, we . . . agree to form ourselves into a Society to be known as the United Society of Operative Cordwainers of the City of New York, and to be governed by the following laws: and also that these laws shall be equally binding on all, and be at all times strictly adhered to, in order that unity, tranquillity and decorum may be manifested among us." [60]

Organised labour recognised the necessity of taking action against these non-union men only when the fact was demonstrated to them that those who did not join the union and were therefore not governed by it would often help to defeat its purposes by playing into the hands of the employer. Since most of the trades did not meet this problem in 1850, few of them took definite action in favour of the closed shop until later in the progress of the movement. There were, however, some trades that were forced to face this situation soon after their organisation. The printers' union of Pittsburgh, late in 1849, attempted to maintain a closed-shop policy and threatened to publish a paper called the *Ratsbane,* as the means of advertising those employers who refused to employ only union men.[61]

The tailors of New York who had struck in July, 1850, found that their former employers were making extensive use of immigrants as strike-breakers. After several unsuccessful attempts to induce these "scabs" to join the union against the employers, the union began to try to force the closed shop upon the employers. One of the reasons why the employers had refused to pay the scale of prices demanded, was that work was quite often taken out of the shops to be made up by the journeymen and was not returned. The employer felt that he should put the wages at a point where he could recover from the honest employés what the dishonest workers had stolen from him. The union now offered to indemnify the employers for any losses which might occur to them in this manner, if the employers would accept the closed-shop principle. The plan was as follows: The union should issue membership cards "by which

[60] *Ibid.*, Apr. 9, 1850. [61] Pittsburgh *Post*, Nov. 15, 1849.

employers will know who belongs to the Society, the employer agreeing to give no work to men who cannot show this card; and the Society will guarantee the safe return of all work drawn by its members." [62] A little later the union took steps to have this provision carried into effect. In speaking of the closed shop at one of the meetings of the union, the leaders gave encouragement to the members, believing that the principle would be accepted by the employers if the labourers would only hold together in their demands.

The United Society of Journeymen Cordwainers "agreed that when *employers employ Society men exclusively, the Society becomes responsible for the work entrusted to its members;* and should any man or men belonging to the trade abscond, or make away with the work entrusted to them, the Society will pay the value of such work." [63] This society was also one of the first to make use of the closed shop, not only as a means of forcing other members of the trade into the organisation, but also as a means of obtaining greater control over its own members. We find the following in the constitution of the society: "Any member who shall board or work with any man not belonging to this Society, who refused to join, should he continue to work with said man or men, shall be fined the sum of one dollar and be compelled to leave said man or men." With respect to the closed shop during a time of strike, the society voted that "any man going to work in shops which are declared to be on strike, is fined two dollars, and 'scabs' are subject to a fine of not less than one dollar, and not to exceed five dollars." [64]

The operative bakers' union adopted the closed-shop principle, and an article in its constitution prohibited all journeymen belonging to the union from working in any shop with non-union members of the trade.[65] Other unions adopting the closed-shop principle were the Carvers' Protective Union, the Upholsterers' Protective Society, the Hat Finishers' Protective Society, the United Society of Journeymen Cordwainers. Some unions, like that of the masons' labourers, permitted their members to act on the closed-shop policy only when the union

62 New York *Tribune*, July 16, 1850.

63 *Ibid.*, Apr. 9, 1850.

64 *Ibid.*, May 14, 1850. The declaration of which the above quotation is a part did not state clearly how the union expected to collect fines from non-members.

65 *Ibid.*, Apr. 15, 1850.

had the majority on any one job, but they were not allowed under any consideration to work on a subcontract.

At this time the unions in the same trade located in different cities generally co-operated whenever it was possible for them to do so. Although the trade union movement of this period did not have its beginning in New York,[66] this city soon took the lead in the general labour movements of 1850, and was looked to for support by the other smaller cities as well as by Boston, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia. Quite often the organisations in other places sent to New York for some of the labour leaders to assist in the organisation of their unions, or at least sent to the New York unions for copies of their constitutions and by-laws. These were sometimes copied almost word for word, while at other times they were changed in certain particulars to fit the peculiar conditions of the locality. In other ways these unions co-operated with each other. Whenever there was a strike or united resistance against an employer at any one place, the other unions in the same trade in other cities were notified and were asked to prevent their members from coming to the place where the strike was on.

Quite often we find the employers of one city advertising in the papers of other cities for men when they were besieged by a strike; but at the same time we usually find the advertisements of the union telling why these employers were asking for labourers. When the Journeymen Printers' Union of Philadelphia was on strike in the latter part of 1850, the employers met and arranged to place the following advertisement in the New York papers, hoping in that way to draw strike-breakers from New York to Philadelphia, without letting the journeymen in search of work know that they were to become strike-breakers. The notice reads: "At a meeting of the employing printers and stereotypers . . . on Saturday evening, October 16, the following resolution was adopted and ordered to be published: Resolved, that after this date we will pay 27 and 29 cents per one thousand ems, instead of 25 and 27½ cents as formerly. Good and permanent situations may be secured by one thousand compositors, by applying immediately to either of the following

[66] Baltimore at this time was also a leader, and except for its comparatively smaller size would be placed far ahead of New York, since the philosophies treated in earlier chapters perhaps had the smallest following here.

printers and stereotypers, in the city of Philadelphia." [67] This was signed by eight employers.

This notice was immediately preceded by the following, also sent in from Philadelphia, but from the printers' union there:

"It is very generally known throughout the United States that the Journeymen Printers of Philadelphia are now on a strike. From an advertisement which appears in the Philadelphia *Sunday Dispatch* of October 27 . . . you would be led to believe that the employing printers have acceded to the demands of the Journeymen, and that all difficulties had been settled; but such is not the fact. Journeymen from abroad are therefore cautioned against coming to the city for the purpose of procuring employment, as they will be looked upon with contempt and abhorrence by every honourable Journeyman now here. When the difficulties are settled, you will again hear from M. C. Brown, President of Journeymen Printers' Union of Philadelphia." [68]

There were at times rather unorganised efforts to aid the striking brothers in different localities, by the donation or the loan of money, to enable the strikers to live while the strike was in progress. These efforts depended entirely upon the will of the locals concerned. In the same manner the unions in other trades in the same city aided by money or by such expedients as the boycott in the settlement of strikes. It was in this year 1850 that the first permanent national organisation of labour, the Typographical Union, held its first convention.[69]

The slight fall in prices in 1851 made the demands of the labourers for higher wages less imperative and served temporarily to decrease their interest in trade unions. The organisations of 1850, however, did not break up although meetings were less frequent and attendance in many cases decreased. It was just at this time that the industrial congresses were making their last stand against politicians and reformers on the one hand and trade unionists on the other; so that the unions themselves were not entirely free from either humanitarian reformers or self-seeking politicians. With the recovery of prices in the latter part of 1852, trade unionism again came to the fore, this time free at first from politics and from humanitarianism.

[67] New York *Tribune*, Nov. 4, 1850.
[68] *Ibid.*, Nov. 4, 1850.
[69] The history of this organisation has been well worked out by Barnett, *The Printers*.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING 1850-1854

During the year 1850, there was a very marked change in the relationship existing between employers and employés. Up to this time many organisations in the trades had been composed of employers as well as journeymen. In fact, many of the policies of the benevolent organisations were dictated by the employers. A few of the unions formed in 1850 at first included employers in their membership, while others explicitly excluded them by constitutional enactment. By the end of the year there was scarcely a union which allowed the employers to be members.

As stated before, the method generally followed by the unions in 1850 was to dictate the terms upon which they were willing to work and then to force the employers, if possible, to accept them. Notices similar to the following were a common means of letting the employers know of the decisions of the union: "On Wednesday evening, September 4, the Bricklayers and Plasterers, by an unanimous vote, declared that they would not work after Wednesday the 11th inst. for a sum less than $2.00 per day, on and after that day." [70] The house painters fixed a minimum of $1.85 for ten hours in summer, and $1.50 for nine hours in winter, and the employers signed individually. This does not necessarily mean that the union did not at the same time consider the interests of the employers. For instance, the bricklayers and plasterers, at the time of organisation, appointed a committee of five to draft a constitution such that "all generous employers may cheerfully submit to its provisions, and capitalists give it their hearty concurrence." They also resolved "that when the Constitution shall have been prepared and received by this body, a general invitation be extended to the employers to meet with us and give us their views upon the same." [71]

Again, the Boot and Shoe Makers' Union of Philadelphia said: "We also invite all to join our Society, whose only aim is to protect the honourable employers against the unprincipled competitor, whose constant practice is to compete in the market by cutting down wages. We therefore call once more on the

70 New York *Times*, Sept. 9, 1850. 71 *Ibid.*, May 23, 1850.

under paid, to come and see the only possible remedy, UNION." [72]

At another time, employers, as individuals, were invited to attend the meetings of the union for the purpose of discussing prices, hours, etc. In September, 1850, the New York tailors sent the following notice to their employers: "To the Merchant Tailors of New York. Gentlemen, you are respectively requested to attend a meeting of the delegates from the Journeymen Tailors' Society . . . for the purpose of discussing the merits of the new bill of prices, recently adopted by that body." [73] At about the same time employers, as individuals, met with their workmen of the Journeymen Oak Coopers' Union of Baltimore for the purpose of discussing the ten-hour system.[74]

In a few instances we find the beginnings of collective action in 1850, having as one party the union and as the other party the employers acting as a group. In general, there was little unity of opinion among employers in 1850 in their attitude toward trade unions. Some recognised that with apprenticeship rules, etc., in force, membership in a union was a badge of good workmanship, and such employers encouraged the workmen in their efforts to organise. A few even forced their employés to join the union of their trade. By the end of the year the evidences of collective action on the part of the employers became apparent in a few cases. In several instances, when a bill of prices was submitted by the union to the individual employers, the latter met together and, after considering the matter thoroughly, either accepted or rejected as a body the terms submitted by the union.[75] When the tailors' strike occurred in July, 1850, the principal manufacturers of that class of goods met and considered the best means of "preventing the adoption of the list of prices proposed by the journeymen tailors." The employers individually reported to their journeymen that they could not afford to pay the advance asked. This led to a conference between a committee of employers and a committee appointed by the union.

72 Philadelphia *Ledger*, May 18, 1850.
73 New York *Times*, Sept. 13, 1850.
74 Baltimore *Sun*, July 10, 1850.
75 From the first there is some evidence of a sort of tacit understanding among employers, though if any sort of union among them was present, it was very secretly guarded. There was in the first half of 1850 a conspicuous absence of any sort of employers' association.

The New York Printers' Union had a similar experience two months later. When the union submitted its new scale of prices to the employers, a part of the latter refused to accept the terms proposed. A meeting of the employers was called at which but thirty-three offices were represented. After several meetings had thus been held, the scale was finally rejected by a vote of nineteen to thirteen. The larger offices, employing the majority of journeymen, voted for the acceptance of the scale, while the smalll shops and "rat" employers rejected it.[76] Moreover, the latter were not even willing to take any sort of unified action, but wished to deal with their employés as they saw fit. The predominance of small employers, each of whom had the same voting power as the representative of the largest office, made them unwilling either to submit a substitute scale to the union, or to leave prices to a joint conference. The reason for this attitude is obvious. The small employer was able to compete with his larger rival only because he could put apprentices at the "stick" and get his journeyman work done at boy rates. As a matter of fact, the larger employers accepted the scale submitted by the journeymen, while the small employers rejected it, when the subject was brought up early in 1851.

The attitude of those opposing collective bargaining at this time was expressed by the Philadelphia *Ledger,* speaking of the printers' strike in Boston in the early part of 1849:

"But what is the remedy? Agreements to *demand* higher prices are legal. So are agreements to *give* lower prices. And what will be the result? A *compromise* between employers and employed; in other words, a contract between two *free* contracting parties. This is precisely where the law must leave it under a free government. Compulsion upon either is a violation of natural right. Competition among employers will raise wages, and competition among employed will depress them. Yet competition must be free to both, for it cannot be restrained without violation of natural right. Hence the only remedy is found in leaving all to hire or work, or not, at their option, and to leave, at their option, an overstocked for an understocked business. Complaints against the employment of apprentices betray ignorance of fundamental principles. If it be an infraction of journeymen's rights, they would probably prevent it by law; for by no other means could they prevent it. . . ." [77]

[76] New York *Tribune,* Sept. 6, 25 and 26, 1850.
[77] Philadelphia *Ledger,* Feb. 2, 1849.

On the other hand, those who favoured such a scheme saw in it a safeguard to honest employers as well as to honest workmen. In considering the refusal of the employers to enter into an agreement with the printers' union, Greeley said: "There are almost as many scales as there are offices. The employers say there is a regular paid scale; I wish there was — no matter how high the prices. I complain that I have to pay more than those who refused the old scale." [78] And again, "There should be a regular Scale of Prices and Code of Regulations in each Trade, binding alike on Employers and Journeymen, and conclusive in all cases of difference likely to arise between them as to their reciprocal duties and rights. . . . There should be no chaffering and higgling as to the rate of payment on a definite amount and kind of work; there should be no power in Employers nor Journeymen to change the rate of compensation, once established to suit their interest or pleasure. In short, the relation of Employers and Journeymen should, whenever it is possible, be placed on a basis of Order, Harmony, System, instead of Anarchy, Antagonism, and Chaos." [79] In the spring of this year the employing printers had a loose organisation, and treated with their journeymen as a group.[80]

Hence, although collective bargaining and trade agreements were not fully developed in 1850, the idea at least was in the minds of both journeymen and employers. It was not until 1853 that the idea was put into practice to such an extent that we may call it a part of the trade union movement of the period. Since the years 1853–1854 witnessed the further development and crystallisation of what are now generally recognised as the chief features of American trade unionism, it will be well to trace the development of the trade agreement in some detail.

As noted above, during the first three years of the decade, the unions had tried to deal with each employer as an individual, allowing his journeymen to remain at work if he came to the union's terms, and declaring a strike against him if he did not. At the same time the journeymen had demanded only what they felt they should and must receive in order to meet their cus-

78 New York *Tribune*, Nov. 4, 1850.
79 *Ibid.*, Feb. 8, 1851.
80 *Ibid.*, Feb. 28, 1851.

tomary expenses. In so doing they believed that fair employers would recognise the justice of their claims and would grant their demands without question; and that unfair employers, whether or not they recognised the idea of justice, would have to be forced into submission to union demands. By 1853–1854, the attitude of the journeymen had changed materially, chiefly for two reasons. In the first place, they found themselves oftentimes unable to force the unfair employers to come to their terms. They soon found too that the advantages in wages which such employers had over their rivals forced the latter to abrogate their promises to employés. In the second place, as regularly as the journeymen demanded increased wages and better trade conditions, some employers refused to treat with them on any terms whatosever, if they could employ newly arived immigrants to replace their dissatisfied employés. This at length showed the fair employers the handicap which they were placing upon themselves by accepting the terms of the striking journeymen. The result was that by 1853 a tacit understanding had developed among a large proportion of the employers, where there was not an open agreement. This understanding in some trades amounted in effect to an employers' association as far as the payment of wages was concerned. Hence the journeymen found that, while they were ostensibly dealing with individual employers, they were in reality dealing with employers' associations, and this for the most part in an arbitrary way, *i.e.*, before any employer would give his reply to a demand for increased wages, he would confer with his fellow employers and would reach some agreement with them. Such an agreement had one of two answers for the union's demands: yes, or no. It gave no opportunity for joint conferences, as most of the employers, previous to 1852, wished it understood that they acted only on their own initiative.

Such an arrangement was highly unsatisfactory to the journeymen, since there were generally enough unfair employers in the trade to prevent an agreement favourable to the demands of the employés, or at least to prevent anything but a minimum rise in wages. This was the condition which faced the trade unions in 1852 and which led the journeymen to abandon the plan of dealing with individual employers. They substituted

for it the trade agreement, which, when agreed to by all concerned, bound alike all journeymen and all employers.[81] This of course meant that in order to get employers to agree to anything at all, the demands of the journeymen must be more moderate than otherwise; even this was more satisfactory than the uncertainty of having any demands at all granted.

On the side of the journeymen it may be said that they generally favoured the trade agreement. They had everything to gain and little to lose by its introduction. Without it, their condition depended largely upon the will of the unfair employers; with it, if their condition did not depend upon their own will, it at least depended upon the balance between their strength and that of the fair employers on the one side, and that of the unfair employers on the other.

It would be difficult to describe in a general statement the success of the trade agreement during the years 1853–1854. In some trades it was quite closely adhered to, while in others it was scarcely introduced. Not all journeymen were willing to be bound by it unless it gave them, individually, more favourable terms than could be acquired without it; and some employers were not even willing to give it a trial. However, we are safe in saying that nearly all of the effective trade unions in the eastern cities had, by the middle of the year 1854, discarded the older method of dealing with employers as individuals wherever it was possible to deal with them as a group. Having once made a contract with the employers' association, the union then set about coercing the non-association employers into submission to contract terms. In case the union and the employers' association could not come to terms, the former sometimes resorted to bargains with individual employers, either to be sure of getting some relief rather than none at all, or to try in this manner gradually to induce all employers to accept union terms in order to secure immunity from strikes.

In some cases, as for instance in the case of the plasterers of Baltimore, the bosses acceded to the demands of the journeymen and shifted the advance in wages to the consumer. The following resolution shows the action of the employers:

81 It must not be inferred from this that the trade agreement was in force among all unions in 1853–1854 or that it was always lived up to in those trades where it was introduced.

"Whereas, the Journeymen Plasterers of Baltimore, having notified their employers that they intend, on the first day of April, to demand $2 per day, we, the employers of the city of Baltimore, in order to meet the just demands of the journeymen, have made a reasonable advance of 3½ cents per yard on the price of plastering." [82]

Whether by trade agreement or by individual arrangement with employers, the unions were almost uniformly able to secure advances in wages and better trade conditions during 1853–1854.

TRADE UNIONS, 1853–1860

It was during the two years, 1853–1854, that the number of strikes increased remarkably. We estimate the total number of strikes in these years at approximately 400. Occasionally as many as twenty-five or thirty strikes were noted in one issue of the New York *Times* or in the *Tribune*.[83]

82 Baltimore *Sun*, Mar. 19, 1853.

83 In New York strikes occurred in the following trades: bakers, blacksmiths, boat-builders, boiler makers, boot makers, boot and shoemakers, bricklayers, brownstone cutters, carpenters (house), carpenters (ship's), cart-men, caulkers, carvers, coal-car men, coal carriers, coal hoisters, coal passers, confectioners, coopers, cordwainers (ladies' branch), cordwainers (men's branch), dock cart-men, dry-goods clerks, engineers (New York and Erie Railway), flaggers, French carpenters, gilders, gold-beaters, gunsmiths, hard-bread bakers, hod-carriers, horse-shoers, hotel waiters, labourers (general), labourers in leather stores, lithograph printers, 'longshoremen, machinists, marine coal passers, marine firemen, millwrights, painters (house), painters (ship's), pattern makers, pianoforte makers, plasterers, planished tin-plate workers, plumbers, printers, private coachmen, quarrymen, riggers, rope makers, rule makers, sail makers, saddle and harness makers, ship-joiners, ship smiths, shipwrights, Singer's sewing machinists, stereotypers, stonecutters, street-car conductors, street-car drivers, sugar bakers, tailors, tallow chandlers, teamsters, truckers, varnishers and polishers, waiters, weavers.

Following are lists of trades known to have been organised during these years outside of New York City: in Philadelphia; bakers, basket makers, biscuit makers, blacksmiths, brass-moulders, brick makers, cabinet makers, cigar makers, coach makers, cordwainers, cotton and woolen spinners, furniture varnishers, glass-blowers, gildérs, hat finishers, harness makers, horse-shoers, house carpenters, house painters, hotel waiters, lithographers, marble masons, moulders, morocco finishers, nailors, oak coopers, printers, riggers, rope makers, saddlers, sail makers, shipwrights and caulkers, slaters, stonecutters, tailors, trunk makers, upholsterers, wheelwrights, white barbers, windsor-chair makers, wood turners.

In Baltimore; barbers, blacksmiths, boiler makers, bricklayers, cap makers, carpenters, caulkers, cigar makers, clothing cutters, coach makers, coopers, curriers, hat finishers, horseshoers, house painters, labourers, ladies' cordwainers, lithographers, machinists, marble cutters, marble workers, millwrights, moulders, plasterers, plumbers, printers, rope makers, sail makers, ship's painters, shipwrights, shoemakers, stonecutters, tailors, tin-plate and sheet-iron workers, upholsterers, waiters.

In Pittsburgh; blacksmiths, boot makers, bricklayers, cabinet makers, carpenters, chair makers, coach makers, coppersmiths, engineers, machinists, marble cutters, masons, painters, paper hangers, pattern makers, printers, puddlers and boilers, saddlers, saddle and harness makers, shoemakers, stone masons, tailors, tinners, waiters, watch makers.

Other cities having organisations (1853–1854) were Albany, Boston, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Harrisburg, Milwaukee, Newark, New Haven, New London, Conn.,

During the years 1853 and 1854 a few unsuccessful attempts were made in New York to form a central body of the trades. The House Carpenters' Union, in March, 1853, proposed a general trades' convention to consider subjects of interest but "leaving to each trade the regulation of its own rates with their employers." [84] But the success of the carpenters in reaching an agreement with their employers led the union to abandon this project. A few other feeble attempts to form a central trades' union were made during the summer, but the general prosperity and the ease with which the separate unions were able to handle their own problems tended to make the majority of the labourers think such a move useless and undesirable. It was not until near the end of the summer, when work began to be slack, that they were willing to listen to such a proposal.

A convention was called at this time to aid the house painters.[85] The Journeymen House Painters' Benefit Protective Society had nominally existed since early in 1850 and had been revived in 1852 for the purpose of improving wage conditions, as well as of retaining sickness and death benefits. With the opening of spring, 1853, this organisation succeeded first in raising the wages of its members from $1.50 per day (regular winter wages for 1852) to $1.75 per day (regular summer wages for 1852) and a little later to $2 per day. It was understood that the wages of the journeymen should be $2 per day to November 1, and $1.75 per day from then until March 1, 1854. This arrangement applied only to the house painters' union. During the summer, the sign and decorative painters applied for admission to the union, and asked that the sickness and death benefits be abolished.[86] The house painters were willing to admit the applicants, but the union was divided over the question of abolishing the benefits. This division developed a split in the union.

Since by this time the rush season of the painting business was over, the employers took advantage of the presence of this

New Orleans, St. Louis, Washington, D. C., Utica, Jersey City.

84 New York *Tribune*, Mar. 15, 1853.

85 Data taken from current issues of the New York *Tribune*, New York *Times*, and the New York *Herald*.

86 It was a very common practice among the unions to abolish their sickness and death benefits during the years 1853 and 1854.

internecine strife among the members of the union and cut the wages to $1.75 in August, 1853, more than two months before the time set in the agreement. At every meeting of the employers' association a committee of the union tried to obtain a hearing but were refused admittance. When attempts at conciliation failed, the union called a strike. The employers tried at first to break the strike by offering to take back the best of the journeymen at $2 per day and to pay the remainder according to their comparative deserts. When this failed, a number of the employers offered $2 to all employés. But the union refused to consider a return to work unless all employers would take back all their journeymen at the established rates. The employers then offered to take back all at those rates except the leaders of the union, on condition that the other journeymen would renounce their connection with these leaders. Again the journeymen refused. Finally, the employers began to bring in painters from other cities, a comparatively easy task at this season of the year.

The union soon saw that if this condition were allowed to continue, their efforts would end in complete failure. They first tried to get the co-operation of painters' unions in other cities to prevent the sending of strike-breakers to New York. This support was easy to obtain, but the men who were being imported were non-union men and hence not under the jurisdiction of the unions in the neighbouring cities. The one remaining source of aid was an appeal for the support of the unions in New York City in other trades. Accordingly, a general meeting of the trade unionists of New York City was called to meet September 1, 1853, to lend support to the painters. In the call to this meeting, it was pointed out that this was not merely a struggle between boss painters and their employés — it was a struggle between capital and union labour, and the success or failure of this strike would be reflected in future disputes in other trades. A demonstration, estimated at from 2,000 to 3,000 men, was made at the appointed time. Two matters of importance were acted upon. The first was a collection of money for the support of the strikers. The other matter of importance was the passing of a resolution, that all trades and societies should send delegates to a mass convention of the trades

to devise means of forming a General Trades Union.[1] The proposed organisation, however, was abandoned, on account of efforts to divert it into politics.

Other attempts to form a central trades union appeared during the next year, among which was an attempt to form a building trades council. In the latter part of April, 1854, the bricklayers' union of New York started a movement of this sort which it was hoped by some of the leaders at least would result in a national organisation.[2] A week later a conference was called at which delegates from the bricklayers, plasterers, stone masons, and carpenters were present. The building labourers were not represented by delegates but sent expressions of sympathy with the movement and promises to co-operate with the other unions. However, the employers soon came to an agreement with these unions and again the movement for a central union was abandoned.[3]

It will be seen that the wage-earners of the United States were much better organised in 1853 to 1854 than in 1850 to 1851. It is apparent also that the unions of the later date were more effective in forcing their demands on their employers. It would be difficult, however, to measure the proportion of this success due to prevailing prosperity during 1853–1854. This undoubtedly played a large part in the success of the union demands.

The wages obtained in some of the trades in New York City about the middle of the year 1854 were as follows: boiler makers, $18 to $20 per week; blacksmiths, $15 to $20; bakers, $14; barbers, $10; bricklayers, $15; boat builders, $15; cartmen, $12; coopers, $12; house carpenters, $15; confectioners, $12; cigar makers, $18 to $25; car drivers, $10; car conductors,

1 New York *Times*, Sept. 1, 1853. The following unions were represented at this meeting: printers, daguerreotypists, engravers, carpenters, fresco painters, shoemakers, saddlers, brush makers, iron-rail makers, gas-fitters, plasterers, harness-makers, sign painters, paper stainers, blacksmiths, barbers, stone-cutters, house smiths, sash and blind makers, tailors, gilders, coach trimmers, chair makers, boiler makers, moulders, caulkers, bookbinders, operative stone-masons, coopersmiths, bakers, tinners, engineers, spar makers, grate and fender makers, silversmiths, hatters, cabinet makers, jewelers, ship-joiners, stair builders, masons, brass finishers, glass cutters, chair painters, fire-engine builders, fire-cap manufacturers, ladies' shoemakers, Hibernian U. B. Society.

2 The Baltimore Bricklayers' Union had already been communicated with and had given a favourable reply. At this time Baltimore had a central union — the Journeymen Mechanics' United Association. Baltimore *Sun*, Feb. 7, 1854.

3 New York *Times*, Oct. 4, 1853

$10.50; printers, $14 to $25; plumbers, $15; house painters, $15; pianoforte makers, $12 to $14; riggers, $12; shipwrights, $18; ship caulkers, $18; ship fasteners, $18; shoemakers, $16; sign painters, $25 to $30; sail makers, $15; tailors, $12 to $17.[4] These wages ranged from 12½ per cent to 37½ per cent higher than those in the same trades in 1850, with the average advance from 20 to 25 per cent.

The most extraordinary advances in wages occurred in San Francisco, which, however, must be considered exceptional. Following are the wages per day (unless specified):[5] printers, per 1000 ems, $1.50; carpenters, $7; joiners, $7; shipwrights, $7; caulkers, $7; wagon makers, $4 to $6; wood sawyers, $4 to $6; coopers, $4 to $6; turners, $8; pattern makers, $7; engineers, $7; brass-founders, $6; moulders, $7; blacksmiths, $5 to $7; iron turners, $5 to $7; machinists, $7; stone-cutters, $8; bricklayers, $8 to $10; tinners, $4 to $8; plasterers, $8; blasters, $4; shoemakers, $4; tailors, $4; house painters, $5; paper hangers, $5; jewelers, $9; lapidaries, $9; musicians, $20; millers, $6; common labourers, $4; teamsters (month), $100; hack and stage drivers (month), $100; cart with horse and driver, $8; brewers (month with board), $100; gardeners (month with board), $60; cooks (month with board), $60 to $100; house servants (month with board), $35 to $70; waiters (month with board), $40 to $70; nurses (month with board), $40; sewing women (month with board), $40 to $70; chambermaids (month with board), $40 to $70.

During the years 1853–1854 employers quite often invoked the aid of the law for the purpose of putting down conspiracies of their employés and of pointing out to them the illegality of their acts. The Baltimore employers of machinists appealed to four prominent lawyers of that city for a decision on this point and received the following reply, which was widely circulated for the purpose of intimidating the journeymen:

"It is the undoubted right of every individual in society to determine for himself the proper compensation or wages for his own

4 Compiled from various trade reports and reduced to a common scale of weekly wages on the assumption of continuous work through the week, an unwarrantable assumption in some cases. Yet it is not possible in these cases to determine the number of days per week employed. The comparison is significant at least as it stands.

5 New York *Tribune*, June 10, 1853.

labor, and to refuse to labor for anyone who will not pay the wages he demands. But although the right of each individual to determine for himself the wages proper for his own labor is universally conceded, there is not the same agreement as to the legality of combinations of individuals for the avowed purpose of controlling or regulating wages, generally, in any trade or community — and it is proper for us to state that, by the highest judicial authority of Maryland, its Court of Appeals, it has been expressly declared that combinations or conspiracies to raise wages, although they are combinations for a purpose neither illegal nor immoral, and which each individual in the combination had a perfect right to accomplish for himself, are yet indictable at the common law as mere conspiracies for that purpose, because of the tendency of such combinatons to prejudice the public. (State *v.* Buchanan, 5th Har. and Johnson, 360, 361 and 368.)" [6]

Another conspiracy action against workingmen during the years 1853–1854 was that brought against compositors on strike against the Philadelphia *Register*. On July 10, 1854, John Reeves, Walter W. Bell, S. H. Breinheiser, and William H. Wooley were arrested on the charge of conspiracy " to injure the business of William Birney," the publisher of the *Register*.[7] This charge was premised upon the efforts made by strikers to prevent others from working for the *Register*. It was claimed that the strikers had made threats against some of the employés who had refused to join in the strike, had tried to bribe the pressmen to ruin the type, and had tricked Birney when he tried to get new men from New York, by arranging to have the New York union supply them, and then by having them refuse to work when they were brought to Philadelphia. After a hearing before Alderman Kenny, the four defendants were held in $200 bail to answer at the Court of Session to the charge of conspiracy. Reeves was also required to furnish a bond of $509 to keep the peace.[8] It is doubtful whether these defendants were ever tried for conspiracy. In the Report of the Bureau of Industrial Statistics of Pennsylvania for 1880–1881 this prosecution is noted,[9] but no statement is made as to its final outcome.

The only other conspiracy case against workingmen in the fifties of which record could be found occurred in 1859. In

6 Baltimore *Sun*, Mar. 16, 1853.
7 Philadelphia *North American and U. S. Gazette*, July 11, 1854.
8 *Ibid.*, July 14, 1854.
9 Page 276.

that year fourteen glass-blowers on strike at Glassboro, New Jersey, were arrested for conspiracy.[10]

Other demands of the unions,[11] such as closed shop, shorter hours, abolition of night work, greater frequency and regularity of payment, substitution of cash pay for store pay, restriction of the number and extension of the time of apprentices,[12] better trade conditions, etc., need not be discussed here, as there were practically no new developments other than the extension and completion of the demands present in 1850–1851. During the five years from the beginning of 1850 to the end of 1854, the journeymen had made great advances in the development of trade unionism. True, not all trades had maintained their unions intact throughout the entire period, but in general there had been a steady advance, eliminating more and more of what are now recognised as non-union methods and building each new development on the experience of the old. During this time the chief aim of the unions was to keep wages at a point commensurate with the increasing cost of living. Demands had generally been for an advance of wages. On this account it may be said that the real effectiveness of the unions had not yet been tested. In no case had they been called upon to defend their existing wages against a considerable reduction during a time of depression.

This test came in the winter of 1854–1855. The era of speculation, which culminated in the crisis of 1857, produced a temporary reaction in the winter of 1854–1855 and brought about a depression, which, though not as severe as that of 1857, meant more to the trade union movement of that decade. An unusually large number of journeymen were laid off during the fall of 1854, and by the first of December less than one-fifth of the building workers in New York City were at work at their

10 New Jersey Bureau of Labor, *Report*, 1887, p. 10.

11 Many other grievances were complained of that are not mentioned here, most of them being confined to particular trades. For example, the 'longshoremen demanded that they be protected from the exactions of boss stevedores who retained one shilling per day from the wages of each man in his shift, etc.

12 In many cases, the apprenticeship regulations of 1854 were not as rigid as in 1850, owing to the greater ease in raising wages at the latter date; while some of the unions among the relatively unskilled labourers welcomed foreigners as well as Americans. The banner of the 'longshoremen's union was decorated with the flags of France, Germany, Holland, Sweden, Ireland, Hungary, and Italy, bound together and over them the American flag and the word "unity." At the top of the banner was the inscription, "We know no distinction but that of merit." New York *Times*, July 1, 1854.

trade.[13] By this time also the other trades had begun to feel the pressure of hard times and this prevented the unemployed builders from getting work of any kind. In the different trades one-half to two-thirds of the mechanics were unemployed.[14]

The immediate effect of this depression on the trade union movement was to point out to the leaders their utter helplessness in fighting against wholesale cuts in wages at such a time. The union constitutions at this time had provisions for strike benefits, but as yet the journeymen had not been educated to the need of preparing for emergencies. Consequently, during the up-grade period of 1853 to 1854 they had not been able to foresee the depression of 1854 to 1855 and had not accumulated any funds with which to pay strike benefits. In many cases the unions were saved the trouble of declaring strikes, for the depression became so acute in some trades as to mean not low wages, but inability to get any wages at all. Even when work was offered, the unionists often refused it at first, because regular wages were not paid.

Here then the unions had apparently failed to do for their members what was most needed. The enemies of unionism took advantage of this opportunity to point out the futility of clinging to the trade union when other means of attaining the rights of the labourers were at hand. Even the leaders of the movement felt their zeal becoming chilled. Some of them discarded the unions altogether. The result was the reappearance of the panaceas and politics of the years 1850–1852.

In 1853–1854 there was scarcely a trade in any of the eastern cities that did not have some sort of a trade union. The depression of 1854–1855 marks the disappearance of nearly all of them. Only a few of the strongest survived the shock and were able to prevent reductions in wages. Beginning with the increase of business about the middle of 1855, the journeymen in the more skilled trades either revived their old organisations or reorganised on a firmer basis. Still others tried to regain what they had lost, but failed. Of those that survived or succeeded in reorganising, we shall mention only a few striking examples. In November, 1853, the New Orleans Typographical Union had forced a uniform advance in wages from 40 to

[13] *Ibid.*, Dec. 21, 1854.

[14] *New York Tribune*, Dec. 19, 1854.

50 cents per 1,000 ems. This advance was agreed to by the Associated Press, the New Orleans employers' association. When the depression of 1854–1855 came, the latter asked for a reduction in the contract price. The union did not believe the employers strong enough to force the demand and refused to grant the reduction. The Associated Press then secretly sent to New York for hands, thinking gradually to replace the union men. When these imported non-unionists arrived at New Orleans, the entire union walked out. This was a move the employers were unprepared to meet and they immediately accepted the terms of the union.[15]

The Stove and Hollow Ware Molders' Union of Philadelphia serves as a good example of the reorganised union. During the latter part of 1854 the journeymen moulders of Philadelphia had allowed their earlier organisation to lapse. For a year and a half their wages had been satisfactory and they felt that this pay streak would continue even though the organisation of the journeymen should disappear. Hence the winter of 1854–1855 found them without a union. When the depression came Warnock and Liebrant cut the wages of the men in their shop. This was followed by similar reductions in other foundries. The journeymen resisted and under the leadership of Joseph A. Barford formed a union to prevent the carrying out of this order. Under efficient leadership the union was successful and maintained the wages at the point fixed in 1854.

Without pausing to describe other unions which weathered the storms of the early part of 1855, we may mention the chief new feature recognised in trade unionism during this year, namely, the need of a permanent relief fund. The experience of this crisis taught the journeymen first, that in periods like the one just closed, the union must have a supply of money with which to support its members during the time of unemployment or during a time of temporary idleness because of an attempt to force employers to union terms; and second, that since not only their own trade but all trades were affected by panics, each union must rely on the journeymen in its own trade as the source of this relief fund. This, of course, meant that in times of high wages, provision must be made for possible depression by ac-

[15] *Ibid.*, May 15, 1855. This was a rare exception.

cumulating a relief fund. For example, the moulders' union mentioned above invested its surplus revenue in Pennsylvania railroad bonds and thus had not only a readily convertible fund secured, but one which was itself cumulative.

During the years 1855–1856 the labourers' condition in the eastern cities was somewhat relieved by the relative decrease in immigration. While in 1854 a quarter of a million Europeans came to the United States, during each of the two succeeding years, the number was less than half this amount. This decrease was due mainly to three causes: First, England needed more men in her army and navy during the year 1855 on account of the war with Russia and the mutiny in India; second, the construction of railroads and the rapid increase in business in both England and Germany created a greater demand for labourers at home; and third, the Irish famine, the unusual emigration from both England and Ireland during the few years preceding 1855, and the loss of men in war, had depleted the English labour market. In order to meet the ordinary demand not only was there a great decrease in immigration to the United States, but many Irishmen and Englishmen who had come to this country previous to this time returned to England after the American depression of 1854–1855.[16]

Gradually the unions regained their lost strength, so that by 1857 they were again able to force better terms from their employers. Then came the crisis of 1857. As far as the effects on trades unions were concerned, this crisis was simply a repetition of the depression of 1854–1855.[17] Again the unions were broken up, although the experience gained at the earlier date aided some of them in resisting reductions in wages and the imposition of severe labour conditions.

POLITICS AND SOCIALISM

As soon as the result of the fall elections of 1852 had become known, the politicians dropped out of the labour movement. The land reformers had already been crowded out, as had also the associationists. Hence, except for a few feeble attempts by

16 *Ibid.*, Aug. 28, 1856. Of course, the reaction due to the American depression kept many away for a time also.

17 In the winter of 1855–1856 a slight depression had a similar effect though on a smaller scale — an effect which nevertheless retarded the union movement.

individuals or small groups of interested persons, the workmen were left to develop their trade union policies in 1853–1854. At times politicians needing the support of the voters set themselves up as devotees of the rights of the working classes; but during these two years the rebuffs they received were unmistakable evidence of the lack of confidence of trade unionists in politicians. At a meeting of the machinists' union of New York City in April, 1853, one speaker appealed for political action on the part of the union, but was answered by cries of "we don't want any politics," "keep to the point," "this is a meeting of machinists — this ain't a political meeting," "where is Mike Walsh, Mike is in Congress," etc.[18]

Again, the unions of Baltimore decided that they needed a daily paper to espouse the cause of the workingman. Accordingly, in the early part of 1853 they contributed to a fund for the purchase of a press and other fixtures necessary to the publication of the *Daily Press* — a paper understood to be first of all a labour paper. Very soon thereafter, the editor, Robert J. Bruce, was induced to announce himself as a candidate for the nomination of State representative on the Democratic ticket. As soon as he began to use the columns of the *Daily Press* to further the progress of his candidacy and of the interests of the Democratic party, the committee of the workingmen interfered and stopped the publication of the paper.[19]

It was during these two inauspicious years that Joseph Weydemeyer[20] attempted to introduce Marxian Socialism into the trade union movement. Weydemeyer was primarily an agitator. He began the organisation of a revolutionary society which he called the "Proletarierbund." In this, as indeed in all his agitation, he was a close follower of Marx and may be

18 *Ibid.*, Apr. 11, 1853.

19 Baltimore *Sun*, July 14, 1853.

20 Weydemeyer was born in Münster, Westphalia, in 1818 (Schlüter, *Die Anfänge der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung in Amerika*, 158 *et seq.*). He received a good education and served for a time as an officer in the Prussian army. In 1846, at Brussels, he came into close relationship with Marx and Engels. In 1851 he came to the United States, serving as correspondent for various western papers and for the New England *Zeitung* in Boston. In 1852 he began the publication of *Die Revolution*, to be issued weekly. Only two numbers appeared. During the following three years Weydemeyer was the most prominent German labour agitator in America. Following his withdrawal from the movement, he engaged in journalism, first in Milwaukee and later in Chicago as editor of the Illinois *Staatszeitung*. At the outbreak of the Civil War he enlisted from St. Louis as a captain and during his service rose to the rank of general. After the war he edited *Die Neue Zeit* for a time in St. Louis. He died Aug. 20, 1866.

considered the American mouthpiece of the Marxian philosophy. The Proletarierbund was short-lived. Weydemeyer then sought to take advantage of the trade union agitation of the time and to use the unions as the basis of a general class-conscious organisation. Assisted by several other typical German intellectuals, he called a meeting of the German trades, on March 21, 1853, for the formation of a general (or American)[21] workingmen's alliance.[22] A few weeks before, on March 5, the same group had begun the publication of a communistic paper in New York which they called *Die Reform*.[23] The purpose of the proposed organisation was discussed at great length, since the trade unionists demanded merely a central trades council. Weydemeyer and his followers finally won out, however, and the platform as adopted recognised both trade union and legislative demands.[24]

The plan of organisation and the expressed purposes of the alliance show, moreover, that its organisers considered it a strictly Marxian body. Delegates were to be chosen by wards, irrespective of crafts, instead of by trade unions. A uniform constitution for each ward organisation was prepared and presented for adoption. The movement spread to other cities and a general national federation or alliance was hoped for.

In fact such an organisation was started among the English-speaking workingmen of Washington by Sam Briggs in the spring of 1853. This was called the Workingmen's National Association and had as its official organ a paper called the *Workingmen's National Advocate*.[25] Weydemeyer considered the Washington association the national organisation for which he wrought, and he looked to it to combine all wage-earners, English and German alike, against the exploiting capitalists.

Unfortunately for Weydemeyer and Briggs, trade unionism was too successful at this time to permit them to guide the movements of the wage-earners into legislative or political channels. As a result, both organisations were abandoned when the trade unionists realised their nature. In August, 1853, *Die Reform*

21 Both names were used.

22 Schlüter, *Die Anfänge der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, 136.

23 Following the European custom of protecting the leading spirit from governmental complications, Weydemeyer did not at first assume a prominent rôle in its pages. Doctor S. Kellner was its editor and Karl Friedrich its publisher.

24 *Die Reform*, Mar. 26, 1853.

25 *Ibid.*, Apr. 30, 1853. The *Workingman's National Advocate* first appeared Apr. 23, 1853.

became a general newspaper and it disappeared entirely in April, 1854. The New York alliance continued for some time longer but had little influence on the labour movement.

But the depression of 1854–1856 presented a situation which the unions, as they were then organised and conducted, could not meet. A few members clung to the unions, but the impatient mass gave attention to other schemes which promised relief. Reformers came forward with explanations of the depression and the means of curing it. Mass meetings and parades of the unemployed became common. Banners bearing such legends as the following were displayed: "Political knaves and speculators have robbed us of our bread. They offer us soup. Behold your work! This you have done in the name of God and Liberty. We have borne the Stripes of men, we now claim the Stars," etc. At a large mass meeting in New York in the latter part of December, 1854, a self-constituted committee organised the Mechanics' and Workingmen's Aid Association, with political mechanics at its head, appealed to the city council for funds and, likewise, a remnant of the Whig party organised the New York Industrial Association for the Protection of Home Labor, and appealed for votes.

In 1850–1851 the labourers in the eastern cities had expressly declared against any participation in the slavery controversy.[26] In their deliberations of the next two years, their attitude toward the Negro problem was conspicuous by its absence, as the question was seldom mentioned, or if so, it met with indifference on the part of the workers. With the rise of the Republican party we find a changed attitude among the northern labourers. Now they were literally forced to take sides. For several years the Democrats had controlled the labour vote of the eastern cities. Now the Republican party appealed to the labourers as such to use their suffrage in combating this system of slave labour. It was pictured to the labourers as making inroads upon their own means of livelihood and hence tending to keep down wages. As a result of this agitation, the wage-earners were drawn together in the campaign under such banners as "We won't work for ten cents a day," "Die Intelligenz gedeiht nur in der Freiheit," "Kansas gehört der Arbeit, nicht der

[26] *Cf.* Schlüter, *Lincoln, Labor and Slavery, passim.*

Sklaverei," etc.[27] At the same time the new party made a direct appeal to the foreign-born voters and was accused at least of facilitating illegal naturalisation.[28] On the other hand, there seemed to be evidences of a trade between the American party and the Democrats, by which the former was to receive aid in disfranchising all foreign-born voters in return for its support of a movement to repeal the Missouri Compromise.

ATTEMPTS TOWARD NATIONALISATION

Having divested itself of the humanitarian ideas of the forties, the labour movement by the middle of the fifties had quite definitely become identified with trade unionism "pure and simple." As yet such unions were for the most part local in their jurisdiction. The rapid extension of the market in the years immediately preceding the Civil War showed the necessity of a wider organisation. There resulted a type of national unionism indicating the evolution to the period of nationalisation which followed the War and, in a sense at least, preparing the local unions for such nationalisation. The national unions as appeared in the decade of the fifties (with one notable exception — the Typographical Union) were organised for discussion rather than for administration and were, at their best, little more than advisory committees to aid the local unions represented.

Indeed the Typographical Union itself was of this type during the first two years of its existence. Throughout the first half of the decade from 1850 to 1860 there grew up a system of communication among unions in the same trade in different cities, especially in time of strike. The unions of New York City were considered by the wage-earners of other cities as the leading organisations in the labour movement and to them were presented numerous appeals for aid and for advice. From this system of communication developed the loose federations of the fifties.[29] The first of these was the Typographical Union,

[27] New York *Tribune*, Oct. 29, 1856.

[28] It was claimed that 15,000 foreigners received naturalisation papers illegally in New York City alone during a period of six weeks, through the efforts of the Republican party. New York *Times*, Oct. 31, 1856.

[29] For an example of such development, see H. E. Hoagland, "Rise of the Iron Molders' International Union," in *American Economic Review*, June, 1913, III, pp. 298–313.

which had its first convention in 1850, but which really had no national union until 1852.

By 1853 the cigar makers in all of the eastern cities had effective local unions. With the extension of cigar manufacture to supply wholesale trade and the increase in the facilities for transportation, it became more and more easy for the employers to extend their areas of competition. This gave the non-union employer a wage advantage over his union competitor and showed the journeymen the need for protection against non-union competition in other cities. As early as May, 1854, the cigar makers of the State of New York met at Albany and made out an elaborate price list which they hoped to make uniform for the entire State.[30] During this and the following year similar meetings were held in other States, notably Connecticut and Massachusetts.

It was soon found that wage competition in cigar making at least was not bounded by state lines, and in October, 1855, the representatives assembled at Hartford, Connecticut, considered the advisability of holding a tri-state convention, to consist of representatives of the state organisations in New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, for the purpose of "harmonising those states under one scale."[31] No action was taken on this proposal. As early as March, 1856, there was inter-local recognition of traveling cards among the cigar makers as evidenced by the records of the Baltimore Union.[32] But it was not until July of that year that we have any record of a national union in the trade. In June, 1856, the United Cigar Makers' Union of New York City issued a call for a national convention to meet in that city on July 2, 1856. More than fifty delegates, representing unions in New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Vermont, Delaware, Rhode Island, and Louisiana attended. The call stated that the purposes of the convention were to equalise wages, harmonise the conflicting interests of the business, and to take action on the apprenticeship question.[33] After the crisis of 1857 this national organisation ceased to exist as did most of the State and many

30 New York *Tribune*, May 13, 1854.
31 Baltimore *Sun*, Oct. 8, 1855.
32 Minutes of the Cigar Makers' Society of Baltimore, Mar. 14, 1856, in MSS. in Library of Johns Hopkins University.
33 New York *Tribune*, July 3, 1856.

of the local unions. A national organisation did not again come into existence in the trade until 1864, although there continued the system of inter-local communication after 1857.

In 1854 a strike of the engineers on the Baltimore and Ohio railroad resulted in the dismissal of sixteen employees. This action by the railroad was discussed by members of the craft throughout the country, and it was finally decided to hold a convention to discuss means of protecting engineers against a repetition of such action. Accordingly, in November, 1855, seventy delegates, representing fourteen States and fifty-five railroads, met in Baltimore and formed the National Protective Association of the United States. After discussion of the aims of the organisation and the adoption of resolutions the convention adjourned to meet in Columbus, Ohio, in 1856. In the interim a number of local unions were formed, some of which outlived the national organisation which ceased to exist after the Columbus meeting.[34] No further action looking toward national organisation was taken until 1862.

Other national unions formed or attempted before the Civil War, but about which our information is meagre, are: Hat Finishers' National Association (formed in New York City in 1854. This union held meetings thereafter only once each four years);[35] Upholsterers' National Union;[36] Plumbers' National Union;[37] National Union of Building Trades;[38] Mechanics' Trades' Union Association of the United States;[39] Lithographers' National Union;[40] National Convention of Silver Platers;[41] Painters' National Union;[42] Cordwainers' National Union;[43] National Cotton Mule Spinners' Association of America (formed in 1858);[44] National Union of Iron Moulders;[45] Journeymen Stone Cutters' Association of the

34 Arthur, "Rise of Railway Organizations," in McNeill, *The Labor Movement*, 312 *et seq.* See also Baltimore *Sun*, Oct. 5, 1855, Nov. 6 and 10, 1855.

35 *Journal of the United Hatters of North America*, November, 1901, p. 5.

36 Philadelphia *Ledger*, June 8, 1853.

37 New York *Times*, Oct. 13, 1854. 2

38 *Ibid.*, May 22 and 24, June 20, Aug. 30, Sept. 8 and 26, Oct. 20, 1854. The union was to include house painters, stonecutters, plasterers, carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers, and masons. Other trades were invited to "join in or take an interest in" the undertaking.

39 Pittsburgh *Post*, Mar. 28, 1853.

40 New York *Times*, July 16, 1856.

41 *Ibid.*, June 17, 1857.

42 McNeill, *Labor Movement*, 387. Attempted in 1859. A convention was called at Philadelphia and formulated a constitution. The organisation perished after a brief existence because the locals could not see the need of a national union.

43 Philadelphia *Ledger*, July 11, 1859.

44 National Cotton Mule Spinners' Association of America, *Constitution and By-Laws*, 1890, p. 1.

45 Formed July 5, 1859. *Cf.* Hoagland, "Rise of the Iron Molders' International Union,"

United States and Canada.[46] From circulars issued by this organisation in April and June 1858 [47] it is known that at that time locals in Washington, D. C., Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, Detroit, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Cleveland, St. Louis, Albany, and Philadelphia, and in Hamilton and Toronto, Canada, were members of this international organisation.

However, not all of the above attempts at organisation were successful, so that the real period of nationalisation began in the years immediately following the Civil War.

[46] Formed at Baltimore in August, 1855. Baltimore *Sun*, Aug. 25, 1855.

[47] In Johns Hopkins University Library.

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